

FRESHMAN SEMINAR PROPOSAL FOR AU '17

Introduction to Wordless and Graphic Novels

Cathy Ryan, PhD Department of English

Course Description

Introduction to Wordless Narratives 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 critical 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. Each class session students will be encouraged in a supportive environment to have fun.

Week 1, 2

INTRODUCTION: The Graphic Novel – Precursors and Historical Context

Student teams (or individuals) will complete a short project based on Berthold Bartosch's adaptation of the Frans Masereel novel, *The Idea* (1932). Lecture will focus on woodcut or "wordless" novels (e.g., Frans Masereel; Lynd Ward, *Prelude to a Million Years & Song Without Words*).

Animated Short Film/Wordless Narrative

- ***THE LOST THING*** (film)

THE ALCHEMIST: A Graphic Novel by Paulo Coelho

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

Literary Project/Adaptation:

Shaun Tan, ***THE ARRIVAL***. Students will work on image storyboards for a final project based on the narrative adaptation of Shaun Tan's wordless, graphic novel.

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

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

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. In 1940, he published a "Novel in Block Prints" entitled **WHITE COLLAR**, a story of workers during the Depression.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Giacomo Patri's "White Collar" (online reproduction, URL above) and write independent paragraph(s) or stories for two separate pictures in the woodblock novel. Students also have the option to write a single narrative that encompasses two pictures.

Political, Historical, & Documentary Graphic Narrative

- Will Eisner's **THE CONTRACT WITH GOD TRILOGY**; 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: Matt Madden's **99 Ways to Tell a Story** (Exercises in Style; 2005);
Miller/Eisner: Interview conducted by Charles Brownstein (Assigned reading; 2005)

Recommended Activities

Watch the video: "Khaled Hosseini: The Kite Runner Graphic Novel" (Author's talk).
URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6Wz33eaTI4>

Fun activity: Visit the website **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 comic if possible. **Bonus credit:** 2+ daily comic postings.

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

Week 3, 4

“Memoir” Graphic Novels/Student Blog Project

Raymond Briggs: *ETHEL & ERNEST: A true story*; *THE SNOWMAN* (film adaptation).

In-class Activities:

Short film: Si Lewen’s *THE PARADE*

Writing Workshop/Peer Review.

HW: Students will create a short graphic memoir (open topic) based on real life or imagination.



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Recommended:

- Neil Gaiman, *Commencement Address* (University of the Arts, 17 May 2012)
- *Napoli COMICON 2012* (May 18, 2012, “Short Italian love affair”- <http://fabioandgabriel.blogspot.com/>)

Review these graphic narratives before creating your own Blog report:

- Allison Bechdel, *FUN HOME: A Family Tragicomic*
- Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean, *MR. PUNCH*
- Gabriel Bá and Fábio Moon, *DAYTRIPPER*
(other titles available; by permission of Instructor).

Curator’s Talk: Introduction to Comics/BICLM (Cartoon Library)

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

HW: Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics*.

“Making My Graphic Novel” (online; short video).

Take-home Quiz.

Week 5, 6

Graphic Storytelling/ Mixed Media

Brian Selznick, *INVENTION OF HUGO CABRÉT*; *HUGO* (film)

Max Ernst, *UNE SEMAINE DE BONTÉ: A Surrealistic Novel in Collage*

Shaun Tan, *TALES FROM OUTER SUBURBIA*, “Distant Rain.”

HW: Shaun Tan’s *LOST AND FOUND*.

Project: Student(s) will choose one of the following activities: **A)** to create a graphic or “Shorts” project with (e.g., captioning, montage, original art, music, etc.) inspired by graphic fiction models; **B)** to create a documentary, graphic narrative, or project based on the graphic fiction; or **C)** to propose another project (e.g., materials at the Cartoon Library). **Short project must be Instructor approved.**

In-Class Activity: Students will bring up to 20 lines of verse, lyric, or original composition to class for a creative in-class group multimedia project based on Shaun Tan’s “Distant Rain” (short graphic story).

Graphic Noir/Web Graphic/Detective Graphic Novel

- Dashiell Hammett, *THE MALTESE FALCON* (John Huston, *film*)
- *MAX PAYNE* (Web Graphic)
- Alan Moore and David Lloyd, *V for VENDETTA* (“From Script to Film,” James McTeigue)

Recommended:

Jeff Smith, *RASL*. “Studio Conversation with Jeff Smith.”

Week 7

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

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. (Working on assignments throughout the term: including discussion; student presentations; participating well during group and in-class activities; and turning in assignments when due).*

Please contact the Course Instructor to discuss any special circumstances, questions, or problems via email ryan.3@osu.edu (or in person). Thanks for your effort this term. CR



Cathy Ryan, PhD

Faculty-Associated (Senior Lecturer)

Cathy Ryan has specialized in teaching freshman composition at Ohio State University. She has a proven ability to work in cross-disciplinary settings and prefers using a portfolio (*e-folio*) approach to teaching writing and communication.

Current research interests include work on several multimedia projects for use with students, teaching wordless graphic novels, and mucking about in the creative worlds of Shaun Tan. She and co-author Christiane Buuck's chapter, "Looking Beyond the Scenes: Spatial Storytelling and Masking in Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*," is slated for publication in spring 2017 in *Graphic Novels for Children and Young Adults* (Eds. Michelle Abate and Gwen Athene Tarbox; University of Mississippi Press). She has been Director, Media Lab (Max M. Fisher College of Business; 1998 – 2000) and founding member of the [Digital Arts and Humanities Working Group, The Ohio State University](#).

She is a member of Phi Beta Kappa. Her professional affiliations include Modern Language Association and Editorial Review Board, *Journal of Business Communication* (1992 – Present). She has co-authored ten plays and published monologues. She has published in *Bridging Learning Communities* (Proceedings of the East Central Writing Centers Association) and numerous journals, including *James Joyce Quarterly*, *Journal of Business Communication*, *Encyclopedia of Management*, *Business Communication Quarterly*, and *MCA Quarterly*.

She has participated in a range of professional activities, including work on the Executive Committee, Department of English; coordinating an annual conference (Conference on Teaching Communication; 1994 – 2001); acting as panel moderator (M/MLA Midwest Regional) and invited speaker (Carnegie Mellon University); and presenting research and papers at numerous professional meetings. As a communication specialist in the Max M. Fisher College of Business, she initiated a number of new projects, including Director, Media Lab (1998 – 2000) and designing and teaching a new course for foreign nationals (MBAs/Master's of Accountancy students) at the *Center for International Business, Education, and Research*. She worked as Lecturer and Senior Lecturer with faculty and honors students in the Department of Accounting & MIS (1991 – 2001). She has received the *Honor Roll of Excellence Award* (Association of Professional Communication Consultants, 1999) and listing in *Who's Who Among Executives and Professionals, Honors Edition* (2008 – 2009). In March 2012, she was nominated for an Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching.

Areas of Expertise

- Composition/Multimedia
- American experience in literature
- Cross-disciplinary studies (film and graphic novel; business communication)
- Twentieth Century

Education

- PhD, The Ohio State University