

Summer 2017

AP/EN 3177 3.0M (S2) COMICS AND CARTOONS II

Course Director:

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Delivery Format:

Fully On-line

Time:

N/A

Description:

From Road Runner to The Simpsons and beyond, this course explores trends in post-war American comics and cartoons: vigilantism, paranoia, national insecurity, normality and abnormality, Peanuts and MAD, 1960s counterculture, R. Crumb, Spiderman, X-Men, Maus, and new directions in contemporary comics and cartoons.

An overflow of colourful graphic explosions encapsulated American moods and dreams, responded to historical events and trends, and supplied a gripping visual vocabulary through which post-war realities could be understood. This half-course will teach you to read the strong lines, bright hues, and lean prose of comics and cartoons from roughly 1950 to today. We'll encounter stories at once epic and everyday, lurid and genial, "normal" and undeniably weird. Under the veneer of triumphant Americanism we'll discover macabre fascinations, social anxieties and neuroses, and personal and national insecurities. Starting with the comic existentialism of Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote, this course looks into the end of the "Golden Age" of the superhero and the emergence of odd and controversial pop-culture fixations on the shocking, violent, and gruesome (monster movies and horror comics). Cold War panic about "un-Americanism," juvenile delinquency, and moral perversion led to a pivotal crackdown--the censorious Comics Code of 1954--and the rise of (very weird) "normal" comics. It also sent strong women back to the kitchen as family values came to the fore. Comics and cartoons bristled at the constraints and were a crucial in the counterculture of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

We will look closely at works from the “Silver Age” of superheroes to see how nuclear family normality conflicts with individual difference and even freakishness (particularly in Spiderman) and at a range of wittily subversive and psychedelic, “underground” comics (the work of R. Crumb, for example). The course will conclude by exploring the diversity of comics and cartoons in contemporary America with particular focus on the emergence of the graphic novel. Throughout, we will interpret the comics and cartoons of the second part of the twentieth century as multi-layered and provocative texts that demand their own reading strategies, treating them as a popular archive of cultural history. The course meetings will consist of two online lectures every week (each one approximately two hours long) and two online discussion tutorial forums every week (each one requiring about one hour).

Category:

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Area:

N/A

Period:

N/A

Historical Requirement:

N/A

Requirements:

A midterm examination (25%), a 6-7 page essay (25%), and regular, informed contributions to tutorial discussion forums (a minimum of ten 1-page contributions and responses) (50%). It is not necessary to complete EN 3176 3I.0 to succeed in EN 3177 3.0.

Reading List:

Barry, Lynda. The! Greatest! of! Marlys! Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 2000; Benson, John, ed. The Sincerest Form of Parody: The Best of 1950s MAD. **Kindle edition**. Seattle: Fantagraphics, 2012. ASIN B013XRZN8U; Burns, Charles. Black Hole. New York: Pantheon, 2005. Clowes, Daniel. Ghost World. Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 1998; Kidd, Chip. Only What’s Necessary: Charles M. Schulz and the Art Of Peanuts. **Kindle edition**. New York: Abrams, 2003. ASIN B015EZOAKQ; Lichtenstein, Nelson, Susan Strasser, et al., eds. Who Built America: People and the Nation’s Economy, Politics, Culture, and Society. Third edition. Vol. 2, 1877 to the Present. New York: Bedford St. Martins, 2000; McCloud, Scott. Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art. New York: Harper, 2000; Miller, Frank. Batman: The Dark Knight Returns (Tenth Anniversary Edition). **Kindle edition**. New York: DC Comics, 1996. ASIN B01AIXM862; Ware, Chris. Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid On Earth. New York: Pantheon, 2000.

There will often be video presentations to view for class. These and some additional texts will be available via Moodle.

Open To:

Yr 2,3,4