

## ***Fall/Winter 2018-2019***

**AP/EN 2176 3.0A (F)**

### ***Comics & Cartoons I***

**Course Director:**

Nemanja Protic  
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Office: Bethune College 303  
Office Hour: Wednesdays, 11:45 – 12:45

**Delivery Format:**

Lecture with Tutorials

**Time:**

Lecture: Wednesday 8:30 – 10:30, Curtis Lecture Hall G  
Tutorial 1: Wednesdays, 10:30 – 11:30 (SC 212)  
Tutorial 2: Wednesdays, 11:30 – 12:30 (HNE 034)  
Tutorial 3: Wednesdays, 12:30 – 1:30 (HNE 105)  
Tutorial 4: Wednesdays, 10:30 – 11:30 (BC 322)  
Tutorial 6: Wednesdays, 12:30 – 1:30 (ACW 209)

**Description:**

This course introduces students to comics and cartoons produced in the United States of America in the first half of the twentieth century (mid-1890s to mid-1950s). It presents comics and cartoons as distinctively modern texts intended for a mixed audience of children and adults and combining the artistic vision and cultural understanding of individual artists, collaborators, and studios. We will explore comics and cartoons as reflecting and engaging with a changing world of modernity premised on socio-political upheaval, massive urbanization, and an increasingly fast-paced capitalist market. As such, the course aims to show, comics and cartoons such as The Yellow Kid, Little Nemo, Krazy Kat, Betty Boop, Batman, and Superman engage with the US culture of the first half of the twentieth century in complex ways, reflecting and critiquing the world in which they are produced. In order to accurately present this complexity, this course engages with its primary texts in three interconnected ways: 1) by, in a loosely chronological order, discussing the historical, political, and cultural context that produced these comics and cartoons, 2) by exploring their formal properties as making up a unique form of modern art predicated on a combination of words and images, and 3) by presenting these discussions within a framework provided by the writings of a German cultural theorist Walter Benjamin, who was one of the first Western theorists to engage with popular culture, and whose essays are therefore extremely useful for thinking about comics and cartoons as works of (popular) art.

**Category:**

D

**Historical Requirement:**

N/A

**Requirements:**

Tutorial Participation – 15%  
Two In-Class Assignments (Written in Tutorial) – 2 x 15%  
Dates: September 26 and October 31, 2018  
Thesis, Essay Outline, and Annotated Bibliography – 10%  
Due Date: November 7, 2018  
Essay (6 to 8 double spaced pages, 12 pt. font) – 20%  
Due Date: November 21, 2018  
Take-home Final Exam (Distributed in last class) – 25%  
Due Date: December 5, 2018

**Reading List:**

Most primary texts – comics and cartoons – are available online (links provided below) or on Moodle, except for: *Batman Chronicles* Vol. 1 (purchase the paperback or the Kindle Edition). *Superman Chronicles* Vol.1 (purchase the paperback or the Kindle Edition).  
Walter Benjamin, *One-Way Street and Other Writings* (NLB), which contains the following essays: “The Destructive Character,” “Marseilles,” “Imperial Panorama” (a section of *One-Way Street* ).  
Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media* (Harvard UP), which contains the following essays: “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility,” “A Glimpse into the World of Children’s Books.”  
Walter Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life* (Belknap Press), which contains the following essays: “The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire,” “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire.”  
Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics* (HarperPerennial).  
Jared Gardner, *Projections* (Stanford University Press).  
Ian Gordon, *Comic Strips and Consumer Culture, 1890–1945* (Smithsonian Institution Press).  
Norman M. Klein, *Seven Minutes: The Life and Death of the American Animated Cartoon* (Verso).  
Esther Leslie, *Hollywood Flatlands: Animation, Critical Theory, and the Avant-Garde* (Verso).  
George B. Tindall & David E. Shi, *America: A Narrative History* Vol. 2, 7th edition (W. W. Norton & Company)/  
Paul Wells, *Understanding Animation* (Routledge).

**Open To:**

Year 2, 3 & 4