



**FACULTY OF ARTS**  
**Department Of English**

**ENGL 399: Introduction to Comics**  
**Fall 2021**  
**Asynchronous Online**

<b>Instructor</b>	Bart Beaty
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<b>Web Page:</b>	<a href="https://d2l.ucalgary.ca/d2l/home/399934">https://d2l.ucalgary.ca/d2l/home/399934</a>
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Zoom office hours will be scheduled each week to allow maximum flexibility. Links will be posted to the course site every week.

**Course description:**

An examination of the formal, historical, and social aspects of comics (comic strips, comic books, and graphic novels). Topics to be examined include the historical development of the comic form; formal analysis of the properties of comics; and the significance of comics in the contemporary media landscape.

This course will be fully asynchronous. This course will take place **online** via Desire2Learn (D2L). To best succeed in the course, students are encouraged to participate in the asynchronous learning tasks using the D2L learning environment.

**Course learning outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a knowledge of the history of the comic book in the United States
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the formal properties of comics
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the way meaning is communicated in comics
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the major genres of comics in the United States

**Texts and readings:**

All texts for this course are available for sale in the University of Calgary bookstore.

Bart Beaty and Charles Hatfield. *Comics Studies: A Guidebook*. Rutgers University Press

Alison Bechdel. *Fun Home*. Mariner Books.

Brian K Vaughan and Fiona Staples. *Saga: Volume One*. Image Comics.

Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons. *Watchmen*. DC Comics

Mariko Tamaki and Jillian Tamaki. *This One Summer*. Groundwood Books.

### Learning technology requirements:

There is a D2L site for this course which contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials (see [d2L.ucalgary.ca](https://d2l.ucalgary.ca)).

In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online, remote and blended courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security, and malware updates;
- A current and updated web browser;
- Current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection.

### Assessments and Evaluation:

**Discussion Contributions (throughout the term).** While discussion forums have been created for each lecture and reading in this course and will be monitored throughout, fourteen of these forums (spaced over the term and beginning on September 23) have been flagged as **requiring** student participation. All students are expected a substantive contribution to the discussion on these days (NO MORE THAN 200 words of writing) that shows attention to earlier contributions and which extends and expands the discussion, or which begins a new discussion line entirely. Students will be graded on the quality of their contribution to the online discussions and their ten highest grades will be counted towards their final grade. Each of these ten contributions are worth five per cent of the grade in this course, for a total of fifty per cent total.

**Short Assignments (October 5, October 12, October 21, November 2, November 30).** At five times during the term you will be prompted to provide feedback to the class readings in non-traditional ways. These may include: Reducing a comic strip to base elements following the methods of Karasik and Newgarden; rewriting a page of a comic book as if it were a prose novel; sorting and assessing images from anonymously produced comics; using the process of detournement on a comics page; creating a short autobiographical comic. Each of these short assignments is worth five percent of the final grade in this course and you are required to complete any four of your choice. These assignments are worth 20% of the final grade in this course.

**Annotation Project (December 9, 2021).** Pick a page that you find interesting in a comic book and trace it. Do not attempt to recreate the original page, but attempt to distill its main features in a simplified drawing. If text appears on the page you should trace the captions or balloons, but do not fill in the text. When this is complete, annotate the page that you have created in the empty spaces (balloons, captions, gutters) in order to highlight the important features. You might consider: colour, shading, line styles, shapes, sizes, angles, placement, perspective, framing, layering, blocking.

Consider the relationship between elements and the overall layout. Please provide a copy of the original page with your tracing. You might consider photocopying your tracing before annotating it as this will allow you to make corrections. This assignment is worth 30% of the final grade in this course.

**There is no Registrar scheduled exam for this course. There are no extra-credit assignments for this course. You do not need to complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this course.**

**Assignments submitted after the deadline will be graded with no loss of marks, but will receive no written comments.**

### **Attendance and participation expectations:**

As this is an asynchronous course, there are no attendance and participation expectation.

### **Conduct:**

Students, employees, and academic staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. As members of the University community, students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

### **Policy on use of electronic devices:**

The use of laptop and mobile devices in class is acceptable when used in a manner appropriate to the course and classroom activities. Please refrain from accessing websites and resources that may be distracting to you or for other learners during class time. Students are responsible for being aware of the University's [Internet and email use policy](#). Electronic devices are not permitted during the Final Examination.

### **Grading System:**

The University of Calgary's four-point Grading System, as described in the Calendar; ) will be used in this course. <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html>

A+ / A (4.0); A- (3.7); B+ (3.3); B (3.0); B- (2.7); C+ (2.3); C (2.0); C- (1.7); D+ (1.3); D (1.0); F (0)

Please note that, according to the University Calendar (F.1) <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1.html>, instructors may use their discretion when rounding upwards or downwards when the average of term work and exams is between two letter grades.

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

**Academic Integrity:**

This course, like all courses at the University of Calgary, holds students to high standards of honest and responsible scholarship. Please consult the [Academic Integrity website](#) for a detailed description of university policies, which will be enforced in this course. Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Associate Dean of Arts for a ruling.

Plagiarism is a type of academic misconduct. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of another person as their own. Another equally serious form of plagiarism occurs when a student submits something they have written themselves for credit in two or more courses without first securing written permission from all those course instructors. Consequences for plagiarism include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense.

**Deferral of term work and final examinations:**

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an [Application of Deferment of Term Work](#) must be completed. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this process with the instructor. The University also has regulations governing the [deferral of final examinations](#).

**Grade appeals:**

To pursue a Reassessment of Graded Term Work or a Reappraisal of an Academic Assessment, Consult the [University Calendar](#) and request advice from the English Department at [engl@ucalgary.ca](mailto:engl@ucalgary.ca). Please note that mere dissatisfaction with a grade is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

**[English Department Website:](#)**

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English.

**Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:**

The [Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club](#) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. Our email address is [smecuofc@gmail.com](mailto:smecuofc@gmail.com).

**Writing support:**

[The Student Success Centre](#) offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

**[Academic regulations and schedules](#)**

**Student Academic Accommodations:**

The Student Accessibility Services website is available [here](#). University accommodation policies can be found at the following links:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-1.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-2.html>

**Program Advising and Student Information Resources** is done through the Faculty of Arts Students' Centre. Office location: SS102; phone: 403-220-3580; email: [ascarts@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ascarts@ucalgary.ca)  
Website: <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>

**Instructor's Intellectual Property**

Course materials created by instructors, including presentations, posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams, remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may not be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

**Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy**

Student information will be collected in accordance with usual classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty and teaching assistants. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

**Sexual violence policy:**

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>

**Other important information:**

- [Wellness and Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Student Success](#)
- [Student Ombuds Office](#)
- [Student Union \(SU\) Information](#)
- [Graduate Students' Association \(GSA\) Information](#)
- [Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points](#)
- [Safewalk](#)

**Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):**

Please participate in [USRI Surveys](#) toward the end of the course. The feedback they provide helps us evaluate teaching, enhance student learning, and guide students as they select courses.