

GERM 561.22/627.49 – SEMINAR IN GERMAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE / RESEARCH
 SEMINAR: GERMAN COMICS

Instructor: Stefan Höppner

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11 am – Noon or by appointment, 218C Craigie Hall

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Comics in Germany – Germany in the Comics

This class has three goals: 1. Explore comics as a medium. What are comics? Are they an art form? A form of popular culture? What are their main elements? How do they tell stories? We will read Scott McCloud’s *Understanding Comics*, an introduction to comics told in the form of comics, plus critical readings by scholars Thierry Groensteen and Hillary Chute. – 2. Provide a short history of German comics. Examples include classics such as Wilhelm Busch, e.o. plauen, Erika Fuchs as a translator of Carl Barks, as well as more recent work by Walter Moers, Ralf König, Reinhard Kleist, and Line Hoven. – 3. Explore outside images of historical Germany, namely the Nazi era and its prehistory, in comics. Readings will include *Captain America*, *Astérix*, Art Spiegelman’s seminal *Maus*, and the first volume of Jason Lutes’ *Berlin* trilogy.

The following core texts will be available at the U of C bookstore. All of these will be required.

1. Goscinny, René, and Albert Uderzo. *Asterix and the Goths*. Trans. Anthea Bell and Derek Hockridge. London, UK: Orion Books, 2004.
2. Hoven, Line. *Love Looks Away*. London, UK: Blank Slate Books, 2011.
3. König, Ralf. *Maybe ... Maybe Not*. Trans. Jeff Krell. 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Ignite Entertainment, 2005.
4. Kleist, Reinhard. *Johnny Cash: I See A Darkness*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2009.
5. Lutes, Jason. *Berlin: City of Stones, Book One*. Montréal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2002.
6. McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. St. Louis, MO: Turtle Back Books, 1994.
7. Spiegelman, Art. *Maus*. 2 vols. New York: Pantheon, 1993.

Additional texts will be made available via Blackboard.

Markings	Grading	
Undergraduates (GERM 561):	A+ = 100-97%	C+ = 70-67%
In-Class Presentation 20%	A = 96-91%	C = 66-62%
Class participation 30%	A - = 90-86%	C- = 61-58%
Term paper 50%	B+ = 85-81%	D+ = 57-54%
	B = 80-76%	D = 53-50%
Graduates (GERM 627):	B- = 75-71%	F = 49% and below
In-Class Presentation 15%		
Class participation 25%		
Term paper 60%		

Participation: Class discussion is a key factor in this course. Attendance is mandatory; unexcused absences will have a negative effect of your participation grade. The quality of the sessions will depend upon your preparedness and willingness to engage with each other. You must have read and thought about the required readings before coming to class. You will need to read the assigned course material, look up the words you don't know, and come to a preliminary understanding of the material we will discuss in class. Needless to say, you should own a copy of the course book and print out and mark up any additional readings. Please note that you do not have to have understood everything you have read to make a valuable contribution. Expressing doubts, disagreements, and asking for clarification is a useful way of contributing to discussion. Your class participation mark will be based on the quality rather than the quantity of your contribution. Dominating discussion without listening to others will damage your grade. Also, it is essential that all participants treat each other with respect and courtesy. Students who feel unable to actively engage in classroom discussion must bring their concerns to the instructor's attention early so that an alternative strategy to ensure adequate performance can be sought. Unexplained absences will be penalized up to a loss of a full letter on the final grade.

In-class presentation: Each student is to prepare one class session. This includes a short introduction to the text(s) to be discussed, providing questions for discussion, and leading the in-class discussion. An outline of your presentation as well as a few questions for discussion need to be provided to the instructor and your fellow students in an e-mail or handout that needs to be provided at least three calendar days before class.

Research paper: Due April 16 at noon. Papers should be approx. 10-15 pages for Undergraduates, 15-20 pages for Graduate Students (letter-sized paper, Times New Roman font 12 pt, double-spaced). If you are a major or graduate student in our German programs, it should preferably be written in German. However, at the discretion of the instructor you may write your paper in English. Topic needs to be discussed with and approved by the instructor, preferably during office hours or after class sessions. At the discretion of the instructor, a paper submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. By turning in a paper, you certify that the work is your own; that you have given proper credit and citation to the work of others; and that you have not committed any other form of plagiarism or academic dishonesty; cases of plagiarism will result in a failing grade, be reported to the department head and the dean, and may result in consequences up to expulsion from U of C. For definitions of plagiarism, please see the course calendar. Students are required to complete all assignments in order to receive a passing grade in this course.

Writing skills statement: All writings assignments will be marked according to content, form, analysis, and originality as well as clarity of writing including grammar, spelling, and organization. To improve your writings skills, contact the Effective Writing Centre (SS 301). If you are a student with a disability, who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to:

- Register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237), and
- Discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 1 January 9	NO CLASS (Block Week)	Introduction – Peter Kuper draws Franz Kafka Walter Moers- <i>Eine Geschichte mit zwölf Köpfen</i>
Part I: What Comics Are and How They Work		
Week 2 January 14/16	Scott McCloud, <i>Understanding Comics</i> , Chapters 1-2 (1-59)	Scott McCloud, <i>Understanding Comics</i> , Chapter 3 (60-91)
Week 3 January 21/23	Scott McCloud, <i>Understanding Comics</i> , Chapters 4-5 (94-137)	Thierry Groensteen, <i>The System of Comics</i> (excerpt, to be made available)
Week 4 January 28/30	Scott McCloud, <i>Understanding Comics</i> , Chapters 6-9 (138-215)	Hillary Chute, <i>Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narrative</i>
Part II: Comics in Germany		
Week 5 February 4/6	Founding Figures: Wilhelm Busch and e.o. plauen	Post-War Comics: Carl Barks in German Translation
Week 6 February 11/13	East German Comics: Importing a “Capitalist” Medium?	Walter Moers, <i>Little Asshole</i> and other comics / Bernd Pfarr, <i>Sondermann</i>
Week 7 February 18/20	NO CLASS (Reading Week)	NO CLASS (Reading Week)
Week 8 February 25/27	Ralf König, <i>Maybe ... Maybe Not</i>	Ralf König, <i>Maybe ... Maybe Not</i>
Week 9 March 4/6	Reinhard Kleist, <i>I See A Darkness</i>	Reinhard Kleist, <i>I See A Darkness</i>
Week 10 March 11/13	Line Hoven, <i>Love Looks Away</i>	From Trash to High Culture? Comics in (German) Society
Part III: Germany in the Comics		
Week 11 March 18/20	Joe Simon / Jack Kirby, <i>Captain America: Trapped in the Nazi Stronghold</i>	René Goscinny/Albert Uderzo, <i>Asterix and the Goths</i>
Week 12 March 25/27	Art Spiegelman, <i>Maus</i>	Art Spiegelman, <i>Maus</i>
Week 13 April 1/3	Art Spiegelman, <i>Maus</i>	Jason Lutes, <i>Berlin, City of Stones</i>
Week 14 April 8/10	Jason Lutes, <i>Berlin, City of Stones</i>	Jason Lutes, <i>Berlin, City of Stones</i> / Final discussion
Week 15 Term papers due	April 16, Noon – Term papers due	