



ENGL-290 – Introduction to Comics and Graphic Novels

University Arts and Science

Effective Term & Year: Fall 2025

Course Outline Review Date: 2030-04-01

Program Area: Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Description:

ENGL 290 introduces students to comics as a form of graphic narrative (sequential art, specifically) by studying comic books and graphic novels. This course asks students to examine the medium through its relationship to literature, film and television, and visual art. Students will also explore the diverse historical, political, and social aspects of this mode of popular culture.

Program Information:

This course is an Arts and Humanities elective for University Studies.

Delivery Methods: On-campus (Face-to-Face)

Credit Type: College of the Rockies Credits

Credits: 3

Course type/s: Humanities

Instructional Activity and Hours:

Activity	Hours
Classroom, Directed Studies or Online Instruction	45
Seminar/Tutorials	
Laboratory/Studio	
Practicum/Field Experience	

Co-op/Work Experience	
Other	
Total	45

Course Requisites:

- Three credits of first-year English are recommended.

Prior Learning and Recognition: Yes

Students are able to request formal recognition of their prior learning or experience outside the classroom. Challenge examination, portfolio-assisted assessment, work-based assessment or a combination of assessments that is appropriate to identify, assess, and recognize prior skills, competencies, and knowledge to achieve course credit. Tuition fees apply, refer to Policy [2.5.5 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition \(PLAR\)](#) or contact an education advisor for more information.

Course Transfer Credit:

For information about receiving transfer credit for courses taken at either British Columbia or Alberta institutions, please see <https://www.bctransferguide.ca/> or <https://transferalberta.alberta.ca> . For more transfer credit information, please visit <https://www.cotr.bc.ca/Transfer>

All requests for course transfer credit from institutions in British Columbia or elsewhere should go to the College of the Rockies Enrolment Services office.

Textbook Resources:

Textbook selection varies by instructor and may change from year to year. At the Course Outline Effective Date the following textbooks were in use:

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*, William Morrow, 1994.

Moore, Alan, and Dave Gibbons. *Watchmen*, DC, 2019.

Satrapı, Marjane. *The Complete Persepolis*. Pantheon, 2007.

Spiegelman, Art. *The Complete Maus*. Penguin, 2003.

Tezuka, Osamu. *Buddha, Vol. 1: Kapilavastu*. Penguin, 2017.

Vermette, Katherena, and Scott B. Henderson. *A Girl Called Echo*, Vol. 1: Pemmican Wars, HighWater, 2017.

Supplemental selections include, but are not limited to, Beaty and Hatfield's *Comic Studies: A Guidebook* (2020), Brunetti's *Cartooning: Philosophy and Practice* (2007), and Theisen's "Manga Studies, A History?" (2017).

Please see the instructor's syllabus or check COTR's online text calculator <http://go.cotr.bc.ca/tuition/tCalc.asp> for a complete list of the currently required textbooks.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- develop specific knowledge of the medium of comics (e.g. strip, book, graphic novel) and the conventions and techniques of comics creators;
- identify the conventions and techniques used by comic creators;
- examine the rhetoric, style, and techniques of sequential art based on close examination of texts;
- describe how social and political issues are communicated through graphic narrative; and
- witness how Indigenous graphic novelists use unique visual forms to tell stories.

Course Topics:

- Sequential Art as Visual Narrative
- From Comic Strips to Comic Books
- Mainstream Comics
- Indie Comics
- Manga in Translation
- Intertextuality and Metacomics

See instructor's syllabus for the detailed outline of weekly readings, activities and assignments.

Evaluation and Assessments

Assessment Type: On-Campus (face-to-face)

Assessment Type	% of Total Grade
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Participation	5%
Annotated Reading Journal	10%
Graphic Narrative (Adaptation or Original) and Self-Analysis	25%
Research Essay/Project (Including Proposal)	35%
Final Examination	25%
Total	100%

Grade Scheme

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
>=90	89-85	84-80	79-76	75-72	71-68	67-64	63-60	59-55	54-50	<50

Exam Attendance:

Students must attend all scheduled exams at the appointed time and place. Instructors may approve an alternate exam to accommodate an illness or personal crisis. Department heads will consider other written requests. Any student who misses a scheduled exam without prior approval will receive a "0" on the exam.

Academic Policies:

College of the Rockies policies related to courses can be found at <https://cotr.bc.ca/about-us/college-policies/> and include the following:

- Policy 2.1.4 Course Audit
- Policy 2.4.1 Credential Framework
- Policy 2.4.3 Students with Documented Disabilities
- Policy 2.4.4 Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct
- Policy 2.4.8 Academic Performance
- Policy 2.4.9 Student Feedback and Concerns
- Policy 2.4.11 Storage of Academic Works
- Policy 2.5.3 Student Appeal
- Policy 2.5.5 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Course Changes:

The College of the Rockies updates course outlines regularly to meet changing educational, employment and marketing needs. The instructor will notify students in writing of any updates to this outline during the semester. The instructor reserves the right to revise, add or delete material while meeting the learning outcomes of this course outline.

