Illustrating The Graphic Novel[or Comic Book]
ART 472 001

SFASU, Spring 2014

Prerequisites: ART 100, 101,110, 261, 400,
Class Time: MW 11:00am - 1:40pm
SFASU School of Art Room B121
Professor: Runcie Tatnall
Office: Art Rm. 111 Email: tatnallrv@sfasu.edu, hours by appt.

“That pompous phrase (graphic novel) was thought up by some idiot in the marketing department of DC. I prefer to call them Big Expensive Comics.”

- Alan Moore

Course Description

Three semester hours (5 hours studio, minimum six hours of independent study per week.) This class is the study and practice of the comic illustrator’s craft - creating art that communicates a visual story, interpreting ideas, emotions, and action. Comic illustrators work in different formats and explore a series of techniques and art media (ex. Pencil, ink, watercolor, digital, etc.) This semester we will be working with pencil, ink, and digital media(for color and tone work.) Instruction will be given in the form of presentations, demos, individual instruction, and critiques. We will research current and historical comic illustration styles, and learn methods of generating creative ideas. You are expected to work with your peers to help generate ideas, and constructively critique each other’s work. The course is especially tailored for those pursuing degrees in Graphic Design, but may be taken for Drawing credit with permission of instructor. We will script and illustrate (minimum) five-page comic pages. The goal is to create professional quality comic art.

Requirements

- ART 100,101,110, 261, and 400 are the prerequisites for this class, unless otherwise permitted. The main application you will need to be familiar with is Photoshop. You can also use Illustrator or Painter if it suits your purposes.
- You will need a portable digital storage device. Use self-guided tutorials to learn the applications. Log out after every session for security. Personal laptops are welcome.
- Use a local service bureau for final printing. Quality output is your responsibility. Lab printers are for preliminary proof, and reference prints only, not for final output. Lab printers are for reserved class work ONLY and not for personal use.
- The design/illustration classroom is to be used ONLY for class work.
- Visual research is necessary. Dedicate a portable memory device and a paper sketchbook for this class. You must take notes, record creative ideas, and save all project related work.
- Use common sense. Avoid accidents. This room is shared with other classes, so identify and
secure your property. Clean up after yourself. Neatness counts. Cut only in designated areas. Never cut on the floor or directly on any unprotected table or counter top. No food is permitted inside the classroom. Eat food outside the classroom only. Spray aerosols only in designated spray booths – not in this room.

- Your work reflects yourself. Use the finest quality materials available. Originality is good. Plagiarism is illegal and immoral.

Attach a positioning statement to the back of each matted print (title, name, assignment). Your final portfolio is submitted in both digital and hard copy formats.

- Portfolio Night attendance is required. Submit your portfolio by Portfolio Night, 5:00 PM. Your portfolio includes (1) all completed printed class assignments, (2) each assignment as a flattened digital file (JPG or PDF) copied onto the instructor’s computer, and (3) Original inked pages. The digital file naming convention is: (Yourlastname01, etc) in a folder titled: (Yourlastname)472S14. Portfolios are anonymously team graded by outside professionals (see Grades below). Portfolios are collected the day after portfolio night.

**Intended Learning Outcomes**

**A. Program Learning Outcomes**

- Students will demonstrate proficiency in foundation studio skills, investigating art materials, art methods, and art techniques related to the elements and principles of design.
- Students will explore, create, synthesize, and solve visual art challenges, using the elements and principles of design.
- Students will demonstrate a broad understanding of significant art issues, both contemporary and historical, by speaking and possibly writing.

**B. Student Learning Outcomes**

- Students will demonstrate the ability to follow directions and meet prescribed deadlines.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to explore creative options within clearly defined limits.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to create original illustrations using the elements and strategies of design with current technologies.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to present projects appropriately for clients and audiences.
- Students will publicly present, critically discuss, and assess the work.
- Students will exhibit a portfolio reflective of their abilities and creative goals.

**Subject Matter**

Generally speaking, you can explore almost any theme you wish, but use discretion. There are a few topics that may give problems, and be inappropriate for the school environment. These could include topics of suicide, hate speech, or overt profanity. Be original, even with traditional subjects. Take them a step further than and maybe less predictable. Comics do not have to be about superheroes, but can also be of a fine art nature. They can be humorous and satirical – it is called “comic art” after all. You don’t always have to use dialogue and word balloons. If you go this route, you should be prepared to spend extra time developing the visual flow of your stories. It is important that they communicate, even if you don’t use words to do this. If you choose not to do dialogue, I would still want you to write about your ideas and turn them separately. *paraphrased from syllabus by Ralph Slatton*

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**Required Text:**

*Writing and Illustrating the Graphic Novel: Everything You Need to Know to Create Great Work and Get It Published*, Daniel Cooney, Barrons. This book will not be available in the university bookstore. It is available new and used
online at Amazon and other sources. Amazon offers free 2-day shipping for college students. You are expected to have the book by the 2nd week of classes.

Other Recommended Reading:

*Making Comics*, Scott McCloud, Harper-Collins
*Comics and Sequential Art*, Will Eisner, W.W. Norton
*Expressive Anatomy for Comics and Narrative*, Will Eisner, W.W. Norton

Supplies:

- Toolbox
- Portable Memory
- Quality prints (when required)
- Small Sketchbook to develop ideas
- Pencils (graphite, B or 2B for sketching, 2H, H, F good for penciling finished art on board)
- Pencil Sharpener (keep your pencils sharpened!)
- Pens (Hunt crowquill, and Speedball with holders. Try variety of nibs.)
- Variety of Markers, black, permanent – these come in the brands Alvin Penstick, Koorinor Rapidigraph Tech Pens, or Sakura Pigma Micron. Get Variety of sizes ranging from .25mm to .7mm. These can substitute for crow quill pens and are much easier to use, but might not as easily give you the effect you want. Fine, extra fine, and broad tipped sharpies can be used - not as good, but will get the job done.
- Brushes (variety of small pointed ones that will allow you to draw a sharp line. Sable #2 is best, but may cost you up to $20 per brush. Good cheaper ones will get you by for this class, but the quality of your materials affects the quality of your work, so get the best you can. The #2 will probably be the most useful, and the one to cough up a little extra dough for.)
- **Permanent** Black Ink (Pilikan, Higgins, Speedball) 1oz bottle should suffice unless you are like me and spill it from time to time. To be safe, it might be a good idea to get a couple bottles.
- Correction Fluid (Zip Cartoonist white ink, Daler-Rowney Pro White, White Goache.) White-out liquid and tape can be used as well. My preference is white ink for corrections and special effects.
- Ruler (15" good)
- Presentation Portfolio. Obtain a locker (supply your own lock). Secure and identify your materials.

Recommended:

- Drafting tape (for taping off edges, and various other uses)
- Compass
- Clear plastic triangle
- Ellipse, and other guides – available at hobby lobby and anywhere that sells drafting supplies
GRADES. Grades are recorded based upon:

1. Individual projects and examinations; respect due dates: late projects are not accepted (instant F), though on-time projects turned in may be revised for an improved grade before semesters end. You are responsible for delivering assignments on time regardless of absence.

2. Final portfolio grade (Exact place and time will be provided by instructor.) The final portfolio will be team graded by three outside professionals and will count for 1/3 of the grade.

3. Attendance (Qualifies all grades. Attendance is more than just showing up. Attendance includes in-class performance, attention level, and participation. Attendance implies bringing needed supplies and a positive attitude. Work seriously and demonstrate a professional work ethic. It is essential to work on all projects in the classroom and to actively solicit feedback from the instructor. It is impossible to earn an excellent grade without excellent attendance. You are allowed a maximum of 3 absences for any reason. 4 = 1 letter grade deduction from the final grade. 5 = fail. Portfolio grades use this scale: A (90-100), B (80-89), C (70-79), D (60-69), F (59 & below). Late projects are not accepted, and all projects presented on time may be revised for an improved grade until final exam day. You are responsible for delivering color projects on time regardless of absence.

CLASS ETIQUETTE

Mutual respect is the golden rule. Stay focused on the project at hand. Remember the saying, “your rights end where your neighbor’s territory begins.” A studio free from distraction is essential to concentrate and to produce quality work. Strive to continuously improve. Plan an equal amount of time in addition to class for each project. DO NOT use cell phones in class. Turn mobile phones off during class. DO NOT use personal audio devices during class. Disruptive behavior is inappropriate and not allowed. Food must not be brought or eaten in the class room.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (please see Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). The instructor has full discretion over what behavior is appropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend regularly or who perform poorly may be referred to the Early Alert Program to provide recommendations, resources, or other assistance to help SFA students succeed.

From the SFA General Bulletin Class Attendance and Excused Absences Regular and punctual attendance is expected at all classes, laboratories and other activities for which a student is registered. For those classes where attendance is a factor in the course grade, the instructor shall make his/her policy known in writing at the beginning of each term and shall maintain an accurate record of attendance. Regardless of attendance, every student is responsible for course content and assignments. It is university policy to excuse students from attendance for certain reasons. Among these are absences related to health, family emergencies and student participation in university-sponsored events. Students are responsible for providing documentation satisfactory to the instructor for each class missed. Students with acceptable excuses may be permitted to make up work for absences to a maximum of three weeks of a semester or one week of a summer term when the nature of the work missed permits. In the case of absences caused by participation in University-sponsored events, announcement via mySFA by the provost/vice president for academic affairs will constitute an official excuse. Faculty members sponsoring the event should submit an e-mail attachment with a written explanation of the absence, including the date, time and an alphabetical listing of all students attending to the office of the provost/vice president for academic affairs for publication.

GRADING SYSTEM

A grade of A indicates excellent; B, good; C, average; D, passing; F, failure; QF, quit failure; WH, incomplete or grade withheld; WF, withdrew failing; WP, withdrew passing. WP and WF are assigned only when a student has withdrawn from the university after the mid-term deadline or
with special approval of the student’s academic dean. No grade can be taken from the record unless put there by mistake. Specified courses are graded on a pass (P)/fail (F) system with no other grades awarded. A student who makes an F can get credit only by repeating the work. A grade of A gives the student four grade points per semester hour; B, three grade points; C, two grade points; D, one grade point; and F, WH, WF and WP, no grade points. The semester hours undertaken in all courses— except some remedial courses, repeated courses and courses dropped with grades of W or WP—are counted in the individual grade point average.

A student who makes an F can get credit only by repeating the work. A grade of A gives the student four grade points per semester hour; B, three grade points; C, two grade points; D, one grade point; and F, WH, WF and WP, no grade points. The semester hours undertaken in all courses— except some remedial courses, repeated courses and courses dropped with grades of W or WP—are counted in the individual grade point average.

Ordinarily a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH or the grade automatically becomes an F. - SFA General Bulletin 2010

"If you are pregnant or should become pregnant while taking this course, or have a medical condition that could increase your sensitivity to chemical exposure, it is important for you to take all precautions concerning your own personal safety. While reasonable measures have been taken to insure your safety, there is a risk in this class of exposure to material that could prove harmful to persons at risk. Please contact the professor should you have questions or concerns. Students who need accommodations for certified disabilities should work through the Office of Disability Services and then your professor."

- SFA General Counsel 2010

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1)**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004/468-1004 (TOO) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).
MAJOR COURSE TOPICS

History of comic books/graphic novels; Comic illustration tools and techniques; construction of a graphic short story; techniques of character development; techniques of sequential design; Photoshop techniques relating to comic book design.

ASSIGNMENTS

Formulate a story concept
• Find an existing short story, or chapter of a longer story which you can translate into comic format, write script. The Project Gutenberg has a large selection of free ebooks and short stories http://www.gutenberg.org/
• Write one paragraph discussing the attributes of all your main characters

Design pages
• Create storyboard(roughs of individual pages)
• Use gestural sketches
• Develop sequential flow
• Insert dialogue

Create a five-page finished comic
• Should include a “splash” page which introduces the story
• Include dialogue with narration boxes and word balloons
• Presentation of Finished work in Portfolio, which will include original inked pages and printed copies that include digital color and value work.

GRADE ASSIGNMENT

Final evaluations will be largely based on the quality of work presented in your final portfolio, Grades will be given by instructor for individual assignments, but final grade will not necessarily be a strict average of those grades.

1/3 of final grade will be determined by assessment of final portfolio by outside professionals, 2/3 by assessment of the instructor of final portfolio and inside of class work.

Basic breakdown is something like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Concept Development</th>
<th>20</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Character Development</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Final Production (overall quality of rendering/presentation of finished work in portfolio)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Presentations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Portfolio night will be during Finals week at 5pm. Date TBA.
Final portfolio to be exhibited on portfolio night will include original inked pages and digital prints of final projects.
"Never draw what you can copy; never copy what you can trace; and never trace what you can cut out and paste up."

-Wally Wood

**Selected Graphic Novel/Comic Illustrators (contemporary)**
Frank Miller
Nelson Daniel
Dave Gibbons
Alex Ross
J.G. Jones
Daniel Clowes
Kevin O’Neill
Marjane Satrapi
Chris Ware
David Lloyd
Sam Kieth
Todd MacFarlane

**Selected Historic Comic Illustrators**
Alex Raymond
Will Eisner
Chester Gould
Jack Davis
Al Feldstein
Frank Frazetta
Bernard Krigstein
Harvey Kurtzman
Al Williamson
Wally Wood
Jack Kirby
Steve Ditko

You will be doing presentations based on artists from this list, or an approved artist of your choosing.
Figure drawing/illustration resource
from Andrew Loomis books: http://fineart.sk/index.php?cat=1

Websites
http://beta.imaginefx.com/
http://www.deviantart.com/

Selected Graphic Novels to Read:

*Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, Frank Miller
*Watchmen (Titan Edition)*, Alan Moore, Dave Gibbons
*V For Vendetta (New Edition - Titan Edition)*, Alan Moore, David Lloyd
*From Hell*, Allen Moore, Eddie Campbell
*Maus: The Complete Maus*, Art Spiegelman
*The League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, Alan Moore, Kevin O’Neill
*Judge Dredd: Complete Case*, Mills, Wagner
*Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid On Earth*, Chris Ware
*Ghost World*, Daniel Clowe
*Persepolis*, Marjane Satrapi

I will be putting some graphic novel reading materials on reserve at the library for 2 hour loan, including some of the above.