

GENG 516/ENGL 315: Comics and Social Justice in PW

Summer 2022
JRC 401 (Th) and Zoom (Mo)
6:00 pm

Fernando Sánchez

fsanchez@stthomas.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

This course will examine how professional writers have utilized graphic storytelling to convey complex information to non-expert communities. While manuals and specifications have long been held to be the genres that technical writers create, increasingly, they are also turning to comics as a genre to disseminate complex information to audiences. Specifically, this course will focus on comics which have presented technical information that is aimed at underrepresented and marginalized communities—both created by technical writers and also created by members of communities themselves. Our texts will cover two important threads: Firstly we will explore the need for more equitable and accessible documentation across medical, legislative, and industrial settings for multiply-marginalized peoples. Secondly, we will look at comics as examples that have been created to help bridge such gaps for communities of color, GLTBQ folx, and neurodiverse populations. Students will be asked to draft their own comics or storyboards that help to convey complex information in accessible ways.

Texts to Purchase:

Han Yu, *The Other Kind of Funnies* (also available via pdf)

George Takei, *They Called Us Enemy*

John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, et al. *March* Book 3

Sarah Bargiela and Sophie Standing, *Camouflage: The Hidden Lives of Autistic Women* (also available for free as a low-res pdf)

Heloise Chochois and Kendra Boileau, *The Body Factory: From the First Prosthetics to the Augmented Human*

Samantha Symington, *First Year Out*

*Our other texts will be available via PDFs

Learning Objectives

- 1) Developing knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives, global awareness, or other cultures
- 2) Learning to apply knowledge and skills to benefit others or serve the public good

- 3) Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)

Assignments (and grade breakdown):

Four (4) Reading Response posts (20 pts)

1 Class discussion lead (20 minutes) (40 pts)

3 Rhetorical Term Definitions for graduate students (15 pts)

2 Rhetorical Term Definitions for undergraduate students (10 pts)

1 Comic and/or Storyboard (45 pts)

1 Final Seminar Paper (50 pts)

1 Prospectus (35 pts)

1 Conference Proposal (25 pts for grad students only)

Total Undergraduate points= 200

Total Graduate points=230

Description of Work

[note: Canvas will only accept .doc ; .docx ; or .pdf file extensions]

RESPONSE POSTS

Before five of our meetings, you will prepare a 500-word response to the assigned readings in which you synthesize *both* the scholarly and primary texts that we will read. That is, it's not enough to comment on the graphic novels without a deeper connection to the theoretical pieces that we will read. At the same time, discussing the research articles in a vacuum is also inadequate. I have created a few forums in Canvas under Discussion for folks to post. These will mostly be open discussion unless I have a specific prompt.

Please take note of three things:

- 1) You will not need to complete a discussion forum post when you are leading discussion (see below)
- 2) You must post before the due date and time. These posts are due in a way that will give me at least some time to look through them before we meet.
- 3) If possible, you may use your post as a response to another student's (or students') posts. As long as the requirements above are still met, I encourage more of a conversation.

DISCUSSION LEAD

You are responsible for leading a 20-minute discussion on one scholarly article or chapter from our readings one time this semester.

Please include

- a brief summary of the most important points,
- an extended example connecting something in that chapter to current or recent events (make sure to make the connections relevant and explicit and not just move on),
- 2-3 discussion questions,
- other elements that help us to gain a rich understanding of the material including other comics we have not covered in class.

You are **not** responsible for covering **all** of the readings or supplementary materials that we will be reading that day. That said, you certainly can bring in other material covered in the current or previous class sessions as asides or connections. Post supplementary materials that you will use in the Discussion section of Canvas under Discussion Lead Materials (handouts, short news articles to read in class, powerpoint, prezi presentations, etc). Consider the discussion leads as your opportunity to focus on an idea that you think is important for class members to consider and pose questions/focus our attention on an important issue or development in the field.

You must sign up before Monday, May 30, and note that these start on the second day of class (Thursday, June 2), so I will distribute the sign up sheet early in the semester. Also,

- Most of these sessions will be individual class lead opportunities, but there are a couple of options for paired class leads in case folks work better with others
- You are not responsible for a discussion post on the day that you are leading the class

RHETORICAL TERMS DEFINITIONS (3 PER GRAD STUDENT; 2 PER UNDERGRAD STUDENT)

In order to help us all understand how our readings this semester are furthering rhetorical theory and practice, I am asking that every week, we contribute to a running list of rhetorical terms that we will find in our readings. Most of these will be explicitly mentioned when authors write something like “Here I extend so and so’s notion of ‘rhetorical dexterity’ to show...” Others will be a little more subtle. Thus, **at least two or three times** this semester (check the calendar for when you are contributing), I am asking that you all post to a table in a Word document where we keep track of these rhetorical terms by writing down where you found the term, who the writer is attributing credit to, the citation for that seminal piece and your working definition. My hope is that by the end, we have a good list of terms and definitions that we can apply to our final papers.

COMIC AND/OR STORYBOARD

This assignment will ask you to apply the principles that we have covered in class into a visual format to convey technical information to a lay population. This comic/storyboard should:

- 1) incorporate design and storyboard principles from McCloud and other readings
- 2) Apply theoretical concepts from our readings or from your own research
- 3) Be aimed at an issue involving diversity, equity, and inclusion in some way. We will discuss possible scopes later this semester.

You may compose two strips/storyboards instead, but if you do, keep each short as you will need to analyze both of them.

SEMINAR PAPER

Undergraduate students: write a 10-12 page paper (not including references) that elaborates on how your comic(s) do(es) all three points mentioned in the assignment. Essentially, you will write an analysis of the text that you yourself have created using the various lenses that we will cover in class.

Graduate students should compose a 12-15 page paper (not including references).

Other possibilities for the comic and paper can be considered with enough time.

PROSPECTUS

Before you compose your comic/storyboard + seminar paper, you will be asked to submit a prospectus in which you document what you hope to produce for the Final Project. We will go over the requirements for this prospectus in class, but you will need to be precise in what you hope to accomplish and how you will go about accomplishing it. Note that although we will look at some examples of prospectuses, that you will turn in something much shorter. I will try really hard to make sure that we don't get mixed up between this assignment and the next one.

CONFERENCE PROPOSAL (GRAD STUDENTS)

Because the final paper in this class will be used to analyze your own comic, I wanted to give folks an opportunity to propose a project that furthered a claim about something we have read in class. Think of this as a 400-word version of an actual presentation you would deliver based on your work if we had the time.

Scores and Grades

Every assignment has its own rubric on Canvas. That said, in general, you can assume that the following descriptions relate to a particular score range that you receive.

A+ (95-100); A- (90-94); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76) C- (70-72); D+ (67-69); D (63-66); D- (60-62); F (Below 60)

70 to 79 (C- to C+)—You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range tends to need some revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style, verbal and visual, is straightforward but unremarkable.

80 to 89 (B- to B+)—You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in this range needs little revision, is complete in content, is organized well, and shows attention to style and visual design.

90-100 (A- to A)—You did what the assignment asked for at a high quality level, *and your work shows originality and creativity*. Work in this range shows all the qualities listed above for a B; but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a verbal or visual style.

Try to avoid the following score ranges. See me if you have any questions.

60-69 (D to D+)—You did what the assignment asked for at a low quality level. Work in this range tends to need significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Verbal and visual style is often non-existent or chaotic.

Below 60 (F)—The work does not meet the requirements or is not submitted completely or with care.

If you are a person who wants or *needs* a particular grade in this course, start working toward that grade right now. Don't wait until the end (or even the middle) of the semester to decide that you need a B or an A.

If you think I have misjudged or misinterpreted your work, come to my office and talk to me about it. I will not discuss grades in the classroom, but I don't mind if you come to my office and talk to me about your paper.

Attendance and Lateness

You should attend class every day. That said, I understand that life happens. Therefore, you are allowed to miss one day due to other outside obligations that arise without any penalty. Afterwards, your score will be reduced by one letter grade for every absence. This is my general policy, but obviously accommodations will be provided during these heady times.

Zoom Attendance

When we meet over Zoom, please have your camera on for our class. You may switch out your background as needed. Please let me know if this is not workable for you.

Email and Emergencies

I will respond to emails within 24-48 hours (excluding weekends).

Late Work

My general policy is that I do not accept late work. If you foresee an issue with a due date, plan ahead and let me know at least 48 hours beforehand so that we can plan with enough time. That is all I ask.

ST. THOMAS BIAS REPORTING SYSTEM

St. Thomas is committed to providing an inclusive living, learning and working environment that supports the well-being of each member and respects the dignity of each person. Incidents of hate and bias are inconsistent with the St. Thomas mission and convictions and have no place here. If you are a student who has experienced or witnessed a bias or hate incident, we want to address the incident and provide you with resources. Go to the Bias or Hate Reporting website to get more information and to make an online report. (

<https://www.stthomas.edu/deanofstudents/bias-reporting/>) Students can also report in person to the Dean of Students Office (room 241, Anderson Student Center) or to Public Safety.

SYLLABUS STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Accommodations will be provided for qualified students with documented disabilities. Students are invited to contact the Disability Resources office about accommodations early in the semester. Telephone appointments are available to students as needed. Appointments can be made by calling 651-962-6315 or 800-328-6819, extension 6315. You may also make an appointment in person in Murray Herrick, room 110. For further information, you can locate the Disability Resources office on the web at

<https://www.stthomas.edu/student-life/resources/disability/>

COVID-RELATED INFORMATION AND POLICIES

Because this course will meet online and have an asynchronous component, we are spared most of the difficulties that come with masks in class and illness and attendance. However, there are a few key points that you should keep in mind in terms of COVID 19 and class participation and attendance.

- If you are feeling unwell, you may miss class, but it is your responsibility to check in with your peers to ascertain what you have missed.
- If you will not be able to complete or submit an assignment due to illness, you must let me know ASAP and, per my policy above, not after the deadline.
- You may not simply disappear from class and expect me to accept all work that you missed late or to receive an incomplete.

Title IX

I am a responsible employee when it comes to reporting sexual violence. That means I am required to report certain incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Our school cares about the safety of our students and has created this requirement because sexual violence, in all its forms, is unacceptable, and we're committed to holding perpetrators accountable and keeping survivors

safe. Your privacy is of utmost importance and this institution will do everything possible to keep all reports private and only share with those who need to know. You will never be forced to share information and your level of involvement will be your choice.

Academic Integrity

Honesty and trust among students and between students and faculty are essential for a strong, functioning academic community. Consequently, students are expected to do their own work on all academic assignments, tests, projects and research/term papers. Academic dishonesty, whether cheating, plagiarism or some other form of dishonest conduct related to academic coursework and listed in the Student Policy Book under "Discipline: Rules of Conduct" will automatically result in failure for the work involved. But academic dishonesty could also result in failure for the course and, in the event of a second incident of academic dishonesty, suspension from the university. Here are the common ways to violate the academic integrity code:

Cheating

Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit

Fabrication

Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Facilitating Academic Dishonesty

Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity.

Plagiarism

The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgment. You commit plagiarism whenever you use a source in any way without indicating that you have used it. If you quote anything at all, even a phrase, you must put quotation marks around it, or set it off from your text; if you summarize or paraphrase an author's words, you must clearly indicate where the summary or paraphrase begins and ends; if you use an author's idea, you must say that you are doing so. In every instance, you also must formally acknowledge the written source from which you took the material. (This includes material taken from the World Wide Web and other Internet sources.)

[Reprinted from "Writing: A College Handbook" by James A.W. Heffernan and John E. Lincoln. By Permission W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., Copyright 1982 by W.W. Norton & Co. Inc.

Students are encouraged to report incidents of academic dishonesty to course instructors. When academic dishonesty occurs, the following procedures will be followed:]

Consequences

a) Sanctions

The instructor will impose a minimum sanction of failure for the work involved. The instructor also will notify the student and the appropriate academic dean in writing of the

nature of the offense and that the minimum sanction has been imposed. The instructor may recommend to the dean that further penalties be should imposed.

If further penalties are imposed, the dean will notify the student immediately and the student will have five working days to respond to the intention to impose additional penalties. The student has the right to respond to the charge of academic dishonesty and may request in writing that the dean review the charge of academic dishonesty as fully as possible.

If the dean determines that no further sanctions will be applied, the instructor's sanction will stand and the instructor's letter to the dean and student will be placed in the student's file. If no further charges of academic dishonesty involving the student occur during the student's tenure at St. Thomas, the materials will be removed from the file upon graduation.

b) Previous Incident

If the student has been involved in a previous incident of academic dishonesty, the dean will convene a hearing, following guidelines listed under "Hearings and Procedures" in the Student Policy Book. During the hearing, all violations of academic integrity will be reviewed. The student and the faculty member charging the most recent incident will be present at the hearing.

IN EITHER SITUATION, A OR B

If the dean determines that further sanctions are warranted, the student will be informed in writing. Among the sanctions considered by the dean will be the following: failure for the course in which the incident occurred; suspension from the university for the following semester; expulsion from the university; community service; a written assignment in which the student explores the principles of honesty and trust; other appropriate action or sanctions listed under "Sanctions" in the Student Policy Book. The materials relating to the incident, including the instructor's original letter to the student and dean and the dean's decision following the hearing, will become part of the student's file.

COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE

The Committee on Discipline shall have the authority to investigate the facts of the particular case that has been appealed and the committee may:

Affirm the original decision and sanction.

Affirm the original decision and reduce or increase the original sanction.

Reverse the original decision.

Disallow the original decision and order a new hearing by the dean (or designee).