

ENG 6824: Imagetexts and *ImageText*

M 9-11

Matherly 0102

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Office Hours: Mondays 1-3pm and by appointment

Course Description

In 2004, UF Professor Donald Ault founded *ImageText*, an MLA-indexed “university-based, peer reviewed journal that focuses on the theory, history, and critical analysis of comics.” In the past two decades, *ImageText* has received international recognition for its publication of scholarly articles that address crucial topics in the emerging field of comics studies. Moreover, it has co-sponsored (with UF’s Graduate Comics Organization) an annual conference that regularly draws panelists not only from North America but also from such countries as Belgium, the U.K. Russia, and Korea. If *ImageText* has succeeded fulfilling Professor Ault’s founding vision of a journal – or in fact, an institution – that fosters the scrupulous academic study of comics, this is in large part because UF graduate students historically have played a major part in its production.

The purpose of this seminar, then, is to provide graduate students with an opportunity both to study the theoretical and critical texts that inform the journal’s scholarly vision and to gain hands-on practice in its production.

Required Texts (in the order in which we’ll read them):

Hillary Chute, *Why Comics? From Underground to Everywhere*

Thierry Groensteen, *The System of Comics*

Barbara Postema, *Narrative Structure in Comics: Making Sense of Fragments*

Sean Kleefeld, *Webcomics*

Aaron Kashtan, *Between Pen and Pixel: Comics, Materiality, and the Book of the Future*

Fawaz, Streeby, and Whaley (Eds.) *Keywords for Comics Studies*

José Alaniz, *Death, Disability, and the Superhero: The Silver Age and Beyond*

Rebecca Wanzo, *The Content of Our Caricature: African American Comic Art and Political Belonging*

Harriet E. H. Earle, *Comics, Trauma, and the New Art of War*

Dale Jacobs, *Graphic Encounters: Comics and the Sponsorship of Multimodal Literacy*

Nick Sousanis, *Unflattening*

Lynda Barry, *Making Comics*

*** Charles Acheson, concluding chapter of *In the Code's Shadow: Censorship, Underground Comix, and the Rise of American Graphic Memoir*

Kirtley, Garcia, and Carlson, *With Great Power Comes Great Pedagogy: Teaching, Learning, and Comics*

A Note About Readings: Each week, I'll give a brief preview of the next week's reading assignment, including recommendations about chapters to read. I may also periodically send out brief readings and news items regarding the profession.

Course Requirements

- **Attendance/Participation: 25%**
 - This includes Conference Submission Adjudication parts I and II
- **Style Editing/Proofreading Assignment: 10%**
- **Book Review Assignment: 25%**
- **Scholarly Journal Review Assignment: 25%**
- **Final Assignment: 15%**

Attendance/Participation:

- Seminar participants should attend each scheduled meeting.
- Additionally, **seminar participants should come to each session prepared to discuss the scheduled readings.**
 - At the beginning of each session, I will ask seminar participants to **share at least one discussion question in response to the day's assigned reading.**
 - I will ask participants to write their discussion questions on the board in the seminar room – or, if we're online, to place their questions in chat.

- **During two of our sessions, we will work together to plan the annual GCO conference**
 - In one of these sessions, the members of the Graduate Comics Organization (GCO) will present their Call for Papers (CFP) for the Annual GCO Conference: *Exploring the In-Betweens: Comics in Flux*
 - Together, we will review the submissions offered in response to this CFP
 - At a later date, we will work with the GCO to organize the accepted submissions in panels, and assist them in creating the larger conference schedule
- Please notify me *in advance* if you need to miss a seminar meeting because of an excused absence
 - (e.g. religious holiday, conference obligation, medical appointment, etc.)
 - I will ask you to make up for a missed class by emailing me a discussion question and at least a 500-word response to your own question which I might share with the rest of the class
 - If you need to miss one or both GCO conference planning sessions, email me in advance and I will send you materials (and criteria) to which you should respond by the scheduled class date
 - I will use your written responses during our meeting
- If you are ill and cannot attend a session
 - First, get medical help
 - Once you are stabilized, contact me
 - Together, we will create a plan for you to catch up with the class

Style Editing/Proofreading Assignment:

- During this term, the *ImageText* team will give you a tutorial in style editing/proofreading
- In turn, you will complete one style/proofreading exercise for the journal

Book Review Assignment:

- During this term, the *ImageText* book reviews editors will give a presentation on the book reviews process.
- In turn, they will offer the class a selection of books sent to the journal for review
- You will choose one book to read and review according to the specifications of the journal

Conference Submission Adjudication:

- During one of our sessions, the members of the Graduate Comics Organization (GCO) will present their Call for Papers (CFP) for the Annual GCO Conference: *Exploring the In-Betweens: Comics in Flux*
- Together, we will review the submissions offered in response to this CFP

- At a later date, we will work with the GCO to organize the accepted submissions in panels, and assist them in creating the larger conference schedule

Scholarly Journal Review Assignment:

- One of the objectives of this seminar is to expose its participants to the production of a scholarly journal – specifically, *ImageText* – by giving them hands-on practice in its discrete processes.
- However, as we’ll discover, the publication of any journal is mediated by its particular history, traditions, form/medium, schedule, and scholarly/institutional oversight
- Thus, for this assignment, I’d like for you **to write a report on at least three (3) competitive scholarly journals in a specific area of your own choosing**
- The format of this report is up to you, but it should address the following questions (*in any order*):
 - What is the history of each journal?
 - By whom was it founded?
 - When?
 - What occasioned its founding?
 - Does it offer any specific vision statement?
 - What constitutes each journal’s institutional structure?
 - For example, is it published through a specific press or university?
 - Does it list a Board of Editors – and if so, what might this list tell you?
 - What are the primary contents of each journal?
 - For example, do its volumes publish only scholarly articles and book reviews on “open topics” – or do they involve special issues? If so, what is the ratio of “open issues” and “special issues” per each volume?
 - Does each journal include materials in addition to scholarly articles and book reviews?
 - What is publication schedule of each journal?
 - What information does each journal offer about submission guidelines and specifications?
 - Who are some of the leading scholars in the chosen field who have been published in each journal?
 - And/or, are there any articles in a given journal(s) that especially stand out to you? How so?
 - What particular relationships – or dissonances – might you perceive amongst your chosen journals?
 - Is there one journal to which you would most like to submit a particular scholarly project?
 - What project?
 - To which journal?
 - Why the pairing?

- What kind of submission timeline do you imagine that accommodates your own work schedule and that of the journal?

Final Assignment

For your final assignment, **pick one (1) prompt** that best speaks to your scholarly, pedagogical, and/or creative interests

- Design a special topics syllabus in comics (or a field of your own choosing)
- Curate and write an introduction to a collection of student work for IT's "From the Classroom" feature
- Create a CFP for a conference that could be held at UF and create a budget for it
- Create a CFP for a special issue of one of the journals you researched
- Write a review of this seminar in comics form
- Interview a comics scholar or producer (or a scholar in your specific field)
- Pitch another project!

Tentative Course Schedule

INTRODUCTION

10 January: Course Introduction

Chute, *Why Comics?*

Scholarly Journal Review Assignment Given

17 January: **No Class: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday**

FORM

24 January: Groensteen, *The System of Comics*

Orientation to *ImageText* and Style Editing Tutorial

Style Editing Assignments Given

31 January: Postema, *Narrative Structure in Comics*

7 February: Kleefeld, *Webcomics*

Book Reviews Tutorial

Book Review Assignment Given

Style Editing Assignment Due

14 February: Kashtan, *Between Pen and Pixel*

Guest Speakers: Dr. Laura Gonzales and Alex Slotkin, co-editors of future special issue of *ImageText*: “Technical Storytelling: Comics in Community”

TOPICS IN COMICS STUDIES

21 February: Fawaz, Streeby, and Whaley, *Keywords for Comics Studies*

28 February: Alaniz, *Death, Disability, and the Superhero: The Silver Age and Beyond*

Tentative GCO proposal review

7 March: **No Class: Happy Spring Break!**

14 March: Wanzo, *The Content of Our Caricature*

21 March: Earle, *Comics, Trauma, and the New Art of War*

Book Review Assignment Due

MAKING AND TEACHING COMICS

28 March: Jacobs, *Graphic Encounters*

Tentative GCO scheduling workshop

4 April: Sousanis, *Unflattening*

Acheson, concluding chapter of *In the Code's Shadow: Censorship, Underground
Comix, and the Rise of American Graphic Memoir*

Scholarly Journal Reports due

Scholarly Journal Presentation #1: Drzata and Hunsaker

Guest Speaker: Dr. Charles Acheson, UF English alum and comics creator

11 April: Barry, *Making Comics*

Scholarly Journal Presentation #2: Jacob and Pan

Guest Speaker: Dr. Madeline Gangnes, UF Alum and Editor of *Sequentials*

18 April: Kirtley, Garcia, & Carlson, *With Great Power Comes Great Pedagogy*

Scholarly Journal Presentation #3: Rothberg and Schell

25 April: **Final Assignment Due**