ENG 504-01W:
Graphic Narratives

COURSE SYLLABUS Summer I 2024 | TL; dr Version

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Rebecca Rowe | Office Location: DTH 314
Virtual Office Hours: W, 10am-12pm; and by appt.
Email Address: Rebecca.Rowe@tamuc.edu (preferred form of communication)
Communication Response Time: Within 24 hours (M-F, 8am-5pm)

COURSE INFORMATION

Textbooks Required

- *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book* by Yuyi Morales
- *Lumberjanes Volume 1: Beware the Kitten Holy* by Noelle Stevenson
- *Maus Volume 1* by Art Spiegelman
- *Ms. Marvel Volume 1: No Normal* by G. Willow Wilson
- *New Kid* by Jerry Craft
- *Picture This: How Pictures Work* by Molly Bang
- Additional materials available on D2L and/or on the course schedule

Recommended Textbooks
- *Arrival* by Shaun Tan
- *The Eleventh Hour* by Graeme Base
- *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* by Scott McCloud

Software Required
- We will be using D2L for all assignment submissions and course materials.
- https://archive.org/—you need to make a free account on here because this is how we will be engaging with a few books.
- You will need to read pdfs during the course of the semester. You are not required to print them off, but you are required to be able to look at them during class. Make sure you have something with Adobe Acrobat or another pdf reader.

Optional Materials
- Purdue OWL MLA is a great resource to check out for citation information.
- www.tinyurl.com/otmarchive is a website I've created with previous students' teaching materials plus additional helpful online resources from me, for those of you interested in pedagogy.
- https://www.tamuc.edu/library/—the university library website.

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Course Description

When people think of books with pictures in them, we almost immediately associate them with children. From the simplest board books through picture books and early readers to illustrated and graphic novels, children's and young adult literature is rife with texts that play with the combination of images and words. Because of their association with children, many people belittle graphic narratives, which is insulting to young people, their literature, and graphic narratives, all of which are more beautifully complex than that view allows. In this course, you will learn to understand and analyze these colorful texts in more complex ways, so you can bring these analysis skills into your scholarship, teaching, and wider life. After all, our world is increasingly more pictorial, so this course will help you learn to read the visual world around you.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to:

1. Analyze the complex combination of images and words in graphic narratives.
2. Differentiate various forms of graphic narrative, including picture books, comic books, and graphic novels.
3. Articulate major scholarly concepts around graphic narratives and how they are expressed.
4. Critically and respectfully approach scholarly inquiries and develop inquiries of their own.
5. Develop and implement their own project plans.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

The most important technical skill you need is the ability to use a word processor, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs. Unless otherwise noted in the assignment prompt, **all projects and essays must be submitted as a Word Doc, a Google Doc, or a pdf**. You will also need to be familiar with D2L. If you choose to do the Creative Tract, you will also need to know how to create the specific medium you have chosen.

Instructional Methods

This course is online and asynchronous. Each week, you will watch a video from me which will walk you through the work of the week. For weeks 1-4, that work will consist of reading the assigned material (including, occasionally, additional material written by me) and engaging with your classmates through discussion boards. Each discussion board will explain how many posts and responses are needed for that week.

Student Responsibilities

You will need to complete readings for each week, including a mixture of primary and secondary sources, in order to engage fully in the discussion boards, which will act as both your participation and most of your homework. This is a graduate course, so I expect each of you to have thoughts, ideas, and questions about our readings beyond what I tell you. I will lead devise discussion boards, but part of the work of this course is to develop your own way for approaching the weekly texts, both on your own and in collaboration with your classmates. You

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will also need to complete a major project (which will require extra work on your part) and small engagement assignments to fully engage with our topic and our community.

GRADING

In this course, **you have complete control over your grade.** This course uses what's called Gameful or Gameified learning, designed around concepts of gaming. Basically, there are many assignments you can complete in this course. You choose which assignments you want to complete based on what interests you and what you think will benefit your learning journey most. So, for example, if you're a current teacher wanting to refine your pedagogical skills, you can work on developing ready-to-use class materials. Likewise, if you want to develop something that could become a journal article, you can do that. You choose which assignments work best for you.

As you complete assignments, you will rack up points. While I will assign points to each project, your grade rests mostly on completion. If you do all that is asked of you in the manner and spirit it is asked, you will earn all of the points that assignment is worth. I may disagree or misunderstand your ideas, but if you put in the labor, you are guaranteed all the points on each assignment you submit. Assignments will *not* earn full points if they are shorter than the assigned prompt, late, or do not complete the work of the assignment prompt (see policies below).

Your semester grade will be determined by how many points you have at the end:
- A = 90+ points
- B = 80-89 points
- C = 70-79 points
- D = 60-69 points
- F = less than 60 points

You can turn in as many or as few assignments as you like to get the score you want. In other words, your grade does not depend on the quality of your work; my comments will be geared towards quality to help you strengthen your analysis and writing skills. Instead, your grade depends completely on what you turn in and how much you're engaging in the work of the course. This is intended to give you more room to experiment and fail, to alleviate stress since you will have control over all that you do, and to allow you to chart your own educational path within this course. If you'd like to learn more about gameful learning, you can do so here.

Assessments

Most of your work in this course will revolve around weekly discussion boards. They are not necessarily required, but they are worth ten points each and would represent a full week of class, if this were a synchronous course. In other words, if you want to get all of the content you can out of this course, **I strongly encourage completing all of the discussion boards**.

There are only three required assignments:

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- **Major Project Proposal** (10 points) in which you will explain which of the following Major Projects you will complete and what your focus/plans are for that project.
- **Major Project One-on-One** (5 points) which will happen in week 5 and will consist of you meeting with me individually to discuss your project.
- **Major Project** (30 points) in which you will engage with the work of this course in a sustained way through one of five options:
  - Analytical: synthesize analysis of 1-3 graphic narratives
  - Research: curate an annotated bibliography of 7-10 scholarly sources about graphic narratives
  - Pedagogical: develop a unit plan/syllabus and 2 lesson plans around graphic narratives
  - Creative: create a graphic narrative of your own
  - Writer's choice: in consultation with me, develop a different project in relation to graphic narratives

Alongside these projects, you can also earn Community Engagement points that allow you to engage in our course community in a variety of ways:
- Office hours (5 points each)
- Review of a Graphic Narrative (5 points)
- Engaging with *Your* Community (5 points)

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:
https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements

LMS Browser Support:
https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:
https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu**.**

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a

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backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport

Interaction with Instructor Statement

As an instructor, communication is key with me. I am happy to be flexible with most things in this course if it will help you succeed, but I'm not a mind reader. You have to tell me what you need so that I can help you. If you need to contact me, send me an **email**. Generally, I will respond to emails sent between 8am and 5pm, Monday-Friday, within 24 hours of receiving them. If you have an urgent question about an assignment that's due on Sunday, you might want to start working on it by Friday so you have a chance to ask me before the weekend. If you get started late, just let me know you need more time in the Extension Request Form. If I plan to be away from my computer for more than a couple of days, I will let you know in advance. I will also update the online grades as quickly as I can. I aim for no more than a week, especially in such a short class. You will receive written feedback for every project, so make sure you check for it.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Policy on Humanity

My courses and teaching are designed around two core concepts: adaptability and empathy:
- I recognize that you have considerable knowledge about many things coming into this class. I start by exploring what you already know so that I can help you take your skills and refine and strengthen them. I also want you to be able to take what you learn in my class forward with you. So, I design my courses around skills that I can teach you that you can then apply elsewhere as you move through your education and life.
- I know that you do not begin and end with this class, and I approach each student first and foremost as a human being who, if we're being honest, may have more important things going on in their lives than this class. **Your health—physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, financial—is more important than anything we will do or discuss, and I want you to prioritize them.** That means a few things:

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- o If you need help, accommodation, an extension, or anything else to perform as well as you can while also maintaining your health, please let me know.
- o As a fellow human being, I respect you. By respect, I mean that I will always do my best to see you as a whole human being whose life experiences have created a person who acts in certain ways and who deserves to be treated like a human being. All I ask is that just as I respect you as a human being, you treat me and your peers with that kind of respect. We may at times cover new or difficult material and we all may have different opinions about it. I ask that you keep an open mind and be respectful with me, your classmates, and our material.

Ultimately, my goal is to discover where you are on your personal learning journey and help you move along that journey in whatever way I can. Most importantly, **I am here to help you, not harm you**. If there is ever anything I can do to help you with that, please let me know!

Grading Policies:
- **Late projects**: Because this is such a short course, it is helpful if you turn assignments in on time. All formal and informal assignments should be submitted to D2L no later than the stated deadline. If you need an extension, fill out the [Extension Request Form](#) before the due date; if you need more time to do your best work, I'm absolutely happy to give up to 3 days extra (for real, I give out extensions like free candy, except at the very end of the semester, when I need to turn in grades). If, and only if, you don't communicate with me, late projects will lose two points each calendar day they are late.
- **Short projects**: Each of the assigned projects has been designed to fit a certain length, the word requirement given on the assignment prompt. I do give you wiggle room: as long as you're within 50 words for shorter assignments and 100 words for longer assignments, you'll be fine. Any project not meeting this standard will lose points according to how much of the project is missing. For example, if the assignment is for 1,000 words, and you submit 500, you can only make half the number of points on the assignment.
- **Missed-the-point projects:** Even though I'm fairly flexible with how students interpret the prompt, if you do not complete the project asked of you, you cannot receive full points. For example, if you submit a project that requires research but offer no research to support your ideas, the assignment would be incomplete and will receive no more than half of the possible points. Likewise, if you write an essay when a podcast is required, you cannot receive full points because you have not engaged with the public aspect of the project.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

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University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.
http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage and Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01.
http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx

http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03
Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf

http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf

AI Use in Course

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. **[To be clear, I determine that there are no such uses in this course.]**

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Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty
13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the

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State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf) document and/or consult your event organizer.
Web url:
http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf
Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit **www.tamuc.edu/counsel**

CLASS SCHEDULE

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*