

# North Hennepin Community College

## ENGL 1950: Graphic Novels

### A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Credits: 3

Lecture Hours/Week: \*.\*

Lab Hours/Week: \*.\*

OJT Hours/Week: \*.\*

Prerequisites: None

Corequisites: None

MnTC Goals: Goal 06 - Humanities/Fine Arts

This course will introduce students to the diverse body of literature known as "graphic novels." While emphasis will be placed on works that are specifically considered graphic novels, it may also include the study of other comics-strips and books that have significantly contributed to the development of the form. Students can expect to be exposed not only to a wide range of graphic novel types, such as autobiography, journalism, history, humor, dramatic fiction, manga, and superheroes, but also to a deeper understanding of the methods of telling stories that are unique to comics.

**B. COURSE EFFECTIVE DATES:** 05/26/2009 - Present

### C. OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS

1. The focus of the course will be on reading graphic novels as literature. While most of the class readings will focus on those works that have been published since Will Eisner's landmark American graphic novel *A Contract with God*, they can also include comic strips that have been important to the development of comics, such as *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, *Krazy Kat*, *The Spirit*, and *Popeye*, among others.
2. In addition, comic books including, but not limited to, such titles as *MAD*, *Superman*, *Spiderman*, *RAW*, *American Splendor*, and *Zap* can be brought in to provide additional context for the core readings.
3. Since the course is designed to introduce students to the diverse body of literature comprised by the term graphic novel, it may include memoirs like *MAUS* and *Persepolis*, the influential comic book about comics *Understanding Comics*, early superhero graphic novels such as *Watchmen* and *The Dark Knight*, and Joe Sacco's rich journalistic comics about contemporary war zones, *Palestine* and *Safe Area Gorazde*.
4. There is also no reason the class should not include comics from around the world; France and Japan, for example, have rich comics and graphic novel traditions, many of which have had, or are developing, a sizeable American readership. Finally, attention will be paid to familiarizing students with the formal characteristics of comics.

#### **D. LEARNING OUTCOMES (General)**

1. Recognition of the breadth of genres; both fictional and non-fictional; comprised by the term Graphic Novel. (NHCC Essential Learning Outcome 1; MnTC G2, comp. a; MnTC G6, comp. a)
2. Familiarity with the formal characteristics that are unique to comics, leading to a better understanding of what is gained and lost by using comics to tell stories, as well as an awareness of how cultural assumptions about comics have shaped the materials presented in graphic novels and the representational strategies chosen to do so, recognizing how those assumptions and responses to them may have changed through history. (NHCC Essential Learning Outcomes 1 and 2; MnTC G2, comp. a, b, c; MnTC G6, comps. a, b)
3. A deeper appreciation of the history of comics in America, leading to insights about the position of comics in American culture that fuel interrogations about why graphic novels may have come to such prominence in recent years. (NHCC Essential Learning Outcomes 1 and 2; MnTC G2, comps. a, c; MnTC G6, comps. b, c, e)
4. Awareness of how graphic novels are an important and vital part of global literature, as more increasingly they tell stories that cross national borders, and since they are associated with a wider sense of visual literacy; evidenced by how its iconography has been widely adopted in computer interfaces. (NHCC Essential Learning Outcome 1; MNTC G2, comp. d; MnTC G6, comps. b, c, e)

#### **E. Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Goal Area(s) and Competencies**

Goal 06 - Humanities/Fine Arts

1. Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.
2. Understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context.
3. Respond critically to works in the arts and humanities.
4. Articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities.

#### **F. LEARNER OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT**

As noted on course syllabus

#### **G. SPECIAL INFORMATION**

1. Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World--Through study in the sciences, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, the arts, technology and professions.
2. Intellectual and Practical Skills--Including: Inquiry and analysis; Critical and creative thinking; Written and oral communication; Quantitative literacy; Information literacy; Teamwork and problem solving.