

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subject Description Form

Subject Code	ENGL1C09
Subject Title	Understanding Comics: Culture and Art
Credit Value	3
Level	1
Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion	None
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide students with knowledge on narrative structure so that they can apply it to the study of comics and other sequential art narratives;2. Enable students to understand the historical development of comics, examining different cultural traditions such as super-hero comics, manga, manhua, comic strips and <i>bande dessinée</i>.3. Enable students to understand the role of comics in Cultural and Creative Industries by itself and in relation to cinema in contemporary society.4. Enable students to understand the different roles and functions of comics in contemporary society as entertainment, education, personal narratives and history, offering representations of reality and shaping views.
Intended Learning Outcomes <i>(Note 1)</i>	<p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) demonstrate a basic knowledge on narrative structure on comics that can be also applied to other visual narratives, enabling students to understand the process of using different semiotic resources in the creation of meanings;b) demonstrate an understanding of the role of comics as narratives that offer interpretations and evaluations of reality, contributing to the construction of identity and how different groups of people relate to each other;c) demonstrate cultural and historical awareness of different comics traditions and how comics, as a form of art, discusses important aspects of human nature, contributing to students' intellectual growth. The course will enable students to understand the role of comics in cultural and creative industries.

<p>Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus <i>(Note 2)</i></p>	<p>Covering a range of different forms of comics as sequential art, such as comic books, graphic novels, <i>bande dessin�e</i>, manga, manhwa and comic strips, this course aims at introducing students to the area of comics studies. The course will discuss the historical background and development of comics as an asset to cultural industry in contemporary society, looking at adaptation of literary masterpieces into comics format and movie adaptation of comics. The course will provide students with knowledge on narrative structure on comics as sequential art.</p> <p>This course aims to introduce students to the study of comics as an art form that offers interpretations and versions of reality. Indicative content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comic books, graphic novels, comic strips: a historical introduction to sequential arts - Visual language in comics: the relationship between words and images - Narrative structure in sequential art - History in comics - Personal narratives in comics: from war to healthcare - Life and death: philosophy in comics - Comics and literature - Comics and film 																																														
<p>Teaching/Learning Methodology <i>(Note 3)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lectures with a heavy dose of interactive discussions on assigned readings and discussion and analysis of excerpts from different comics; use of powerpoint slides, handouts and web-based resources. 2. In-class group activities and assignments focusing on reading assignments and short analysis and discussion of selected texts. 																																														
<p>Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes <i>(Note 4)</i></p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="496 1368 1522 1865"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Specific assessment methods/tasks</th> <th rowspan="2">% weighting</th> <th colspan="6">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>a</th> <th>b</th> <th>c</th> <th>d</th> <th>e</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Seminar presentation</td> <td>20%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Take-home exam</td> <td>40%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Term paper</td> <td>40%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100 %</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seminar presentation should be in the form of a literature review and in-progress report of final project (term paper). 2. The take-home exam, in the form of essay, will include questions addressing 	Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)						a	b	c	d	e		1. Seminar presentation	20%	✓	✓					2. Take-home exam	40%	✓	✓	✓				3. Term paper	40%	✓	✓	✓				Total	100 %						
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	<p>readings and in-class discussions, in which students can demonstrate their understanding of comics as a pop cultural artifact in terms of form and content.</p> <p>3. As a group task, the term paper should include the analysis and discussion of aspects of comics as a form of art in contemporary society, focusing on issues of representation, including identity, the human condition, or any other aspects relevant to the course. The analysis of comics will be carried out based on recent descriptive tools developed for the annotation of comics and the study of narratives. Office consultation will be offered to discuss ideas and paper development.</p>	
Student Study Effort Expected	Class contact:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lecture 	26 Hrs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seminar 	13 Hrs.
	Other student study effort:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparation for seminars and lectures 	26 Hrs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparation for assignments 	39 Hrs.
	Total student study effort	104 Hrs.
Reading List and References	<p>Required readings</p> <p>Groensteen, T. (2007). <i>The System of Comics</i>, United States : University Press of Mississippi. (pp. 1-102)</p> <p>Harvey, R. C. (1996). <i>The Arts of the Comic Book: An Aesthetic History</i>. Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi, pp. 3-49; 173-191. (67 pages)</p> <p>Bateman, J. & Veloso, Francisco O. D. (2013). The Semiotic Resources of Comics in Movie Adaptation: Ang Lee's Hulk (2013) as a case study. <i>Studies of Comics</i>, 4 (1), 135-157. (22 pages)</p> <p>Veloso, Francisco O. D. & Bateman, J. (2013). The multimodal construction of acceptability: Marvel's Civil War comic books and the PATRIOT Act. <i>Critical Discourse Studies</i>. Volume 10, Issue 4. DOI: 10.1080/17405904.2013.813776, pp. 1-17. (17 pages)</p> <p>Wartenberg, T. E. (2012). Wordy pictures: Theorizing the relationship between image and text in comics. IN: Aaron meskin and Roy T. Cook (eds), <i>The art of comics: A philosophical approach</i>. West Sussex, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., pp. 87-104. (17 pages)</p> <p>Excerpts of original works spanning from the late 1930s to the present will be assigned for reading during the semester, to illustrate different phases and aspects of the development of narratives in comics, highlighting historical context of production and consumption. Films inspired by and adapting comics will be assigned for discussion, to demonstrate the influence of one medium over the other</p>	

	<p>Supporting readings</p> <p>Bramlett, F. (2012). <i>Linguistics and the study of comics</i>. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.</p> <p>Cohn, N. (2013). <i>The Visual Language of Comics</i>. London & New York: Bloomsbury.</p> <p>Chute, Hillary & Jagoda, Patrick (Eds). (2014). <i>Comics & media. Special issue of Critical Inquiry</i>. Spring 2014. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.</p> <p>Gravett, Paul (2005). <i>Graphic Novels: Stories to Change Your Life</i>. London: Aurum Press Limited.</p> <p>Gravett, Paul. (2013). <i>Comics art</i>. London: Tate Publishing.</p> <p>Herman, D. (2009). <i>Basic Elements of Narrative</i>. London: Blackwell Publishing.</p> <p>Inge, M. T. (1990). <i>Comics as Culture</i>. United States: University Press of Mississippi.</p> <p>Lopes, Paul. (2009). <i>Demanding respect: The evolution of the American comic book</i>. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.</p> <p>McCloud, S.F. (1993). <i>Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art</i>. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.</p> <p>McLaughlin, Jeff (2005). <i>Comics as Philosophy</i>. Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi.</p> <p>Postema, Barbara. (2013). <i>Narrative Structure in Comics: Making Sense of Fragments</i>. Rochester, NY: RIT Press.</p> <p>Power, Dominic & Scott, Allen. (2004). <i>Cultural Industries and the Production of Culture</i>. New York: Routledge.</p> <p>Reynolds, Robert. (1992). <i>Super-heroes: A Modern Mythology</i>. Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi.</p> <p>Saraceni, M. (2003). <i>The language of comics</i>. London and New York: Routledge.</p>
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Developed by Francisco O. D. Veloso (May, 2014).