

Summer 2020

AP/EN 2176 3.0A (S1) *Comics and Cartoons I: 1900-Cold War in the United States*

Course Director: Professor Jonathan Warren
Office: Dahdaleh 2045
Phone: (416) 736-2100 x. 22883
Email: jwarren@yorku.ca

Delivery Format: On-line

Time: LECTURES AND TUTORIALS: Each week, two lectures will be posted online. Each will include an audio file and a PDF containing a PowerPoint slideshow.

In addition, a tutorial discussion PowerPoint with discussion questions will be posted twice weekly.

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS :
Professor Warren and the TAs will be available by appointment for up to one hour each week for interactive online office hours via the Chat function on Moodle.

Description: From the Yellow Kid to the waning of the superheroes' Golden Age (1900-Cold War) this course explores the growth of comics and cartoons: creative conflicts, contexts and themes (outsiders, war, ethnicity), Bugs Bunny, Superman, superheroes, and Disney, and how they account for their times.

During the first part of the twentieth century, comics and cartoons were the most popular forum within which America imagined the conflicts of the time. Familiar, visual, and direct, they invented mythic landscapes, heroes, and stories that were the very vocabulary of cultural self-awareness. From cheeky Buster Brown to Betty Boop, Winnie Winkle to Wonder Woman, Mickey Mouse to Bugs Bunny, and Krazy Kat to Batman, comics and cartoons provide a dazzlingly visual panoramic history of national self-fashioning. In this half-course, we will learn to read and understand the multi-level visual vocabulary of comics and cartoons (from roughly 1900-1950), beginning with the turn-of-the-century newspaper culture and the proliferation of urban, class-conscious comics.

We will consider how comics explored the ideological dimensions of everyday life, experimenting with Cubism and Surrealism. We will explore how these texts record the dramas of immigration and assimilation; how they depict the squalor, danger, and excitement of the metropolis; and how they exploit and channel the racism, nativism, xenophobia, and crime-aded despair of pulp fiction, hardboiled prose, and film noir. One particular focus will be the competition between urban, ethnically-inflected cartoons (of the Fleischer Brothers studios) and Walt Disney's vision of America. Understanding the functions of wartime comics and cartoons (propaganda, narrative "history," and commentary)

will prepare us for our exploration of the superhero, its mythic motifs (the immigrant saga, secret identities, technology and futuristic fantasy, the journalist and the vigilante, and crime), and its female versions (heroic or active women professionals and the "jungle girls"). The course ends with comics and cartoons in the wake of World War Two: a lushly-coloured universe of normality shot through with crime; serenity worried and thrilled by degeneracy, perversion, and social deviance; and a weird crop of early Cold War horror, crime, and sex comics that push "decency" to its limits. As we point the way toward post-war innovations in comics and cartoons, we will consider the effects of censorship on the comics—from the media-sanitizing Hays Act (1935) to the post-war Comics Code (1954)—with its fears of juvenile delinquency and its paranoia about the corrupting influences of popular art.

This course will treat the comics and cartoons of the first part of the twentieth century as complex cultural artifacts that make provocative interpretive demands on their audiences. We will explore how comics and cartoons demand their own reading strategies and discover that they constitute a storehouse of cultural, aesthetic, and political history, complementing and interacting with other media and art.

Category:	D
Historical Requirement:	N/A
Requirements:	<p>Discussion Forum Contributions 40%</p> <p>8 times (4 before the midterm examination; 4 times after that) x 5% Midterm Examination (2 June 2020 online) 15%</p> <p>5-7 Page Writing Exercise (Due 16 June 2017 via turnitin.com) 20%</p> <p>Final Examination (during exam period, 24-26 June, date TBA, online) 25%</p>
Reading List:	<p>Finger, Bill and Bob Kane. <u>Batman Chronicles</u>. Volume 1. Kindle Edition. New York: DC Comics, 2013. ASIN B00BX3XU1O.</p> <p>Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth and Thomas J. Sugrue. <u>These United States: A Nation in the Making: 1890 to the Present</u>. Ebook. New York: Norton, 2015. ISBN 978-0393-61665-1. Order via External link.</p> <p>Gray, Harold. <u>Little Orphan Annie: 1935</u>. [Moodle]</p> <p>Herriman, George. <u>The George Herriman Library: Krazy & Ignatz 1916-1918</u>. Kindle edition. Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 2019. ASIN B07NPXW7M8.</p> <p>McCay, Winsor. <u>Little Nemo in Slumberland</u>. Volume 1: October 15, 1905/January 21, 1906). Kindle edition. ASIN B00QEC07Z6.</p> <p>McCloud, Scott. <u>Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art</u>. Northampton, Massachusetts: Kitchen Sink P, 1993. New York: William Morrow Paperback, 1994. [E-text via External link].</p> <p>Siegel, Jerry and Joe Shuster. <u>The Superman Chronicles Volume 1</u>. Kindle edition. New York: DC Comics, 2013. ASIN B00DE2N5KS.</p> <p>Note: the Gilmore and Sugrue history text is recommended but not required. Because all the texts are available in electronic editions, no print copies have been ordered. If you prefer a print copy of anything, you can arrange to order it yourself via the York University Bookstore or from any other vendor.</p>
Open To:	Year 2, 3, 4