

Summer 2021

AP/EN 2176 3.0A (S1)	Comics and Cartoons I: 1900-Cold War in the United States
Course Director:	Jonathan Warren Victor Dahdaleh Building 2045 Ext. 22883 jwarren@yorku.ca
Time:	Lectures and tutorials posted weekly on Tuesday
Delivery Format:	ONLINE – (asynchronous delivery) – There is no set course meeting time. Students may engage with course content/materials 24/7.
Description:	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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-addled despair of pulp fiction, hard-boiled 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,</p>

	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Category:	D
Historical Requirement:	N/A
Requirements:	<p>Discussion forum participation: 40%</p> <p>Midterm examination: 15%</p> <p>Writing exercise: 20%</p> <p>Final examination: 25%</p>
Reading List:	<p>Finger, Bill and Bob Kane. <u>Batman Chronicles</u>. Volume 1. Kindle Edition. New York: DC Comics, 2013. ASIN B00BX3XU10.</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 978-0-393-61665-1. [Recommended].</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.</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>Additional electronic readings and audio/visual materials posted to Moodle.</p>
Open To:	<p>Years 2, 3, 4+ (<i>Not open</i> to Year 1)</p>