

Summer 2021

AP/EN 2177 3.0M (S2)	Comics and Cartoons II: Cold War-Today 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 Road Runner to <u>The Simpsons</u>, this course explores trends in post-war American comics and cartoons: vigilantism, paranoia, national insecurity, normality and abnormality, Peanuts and <u>MAD</u>, the counterculture, R. Crumb, Spiderman, X-Men, and new directions in contemporary comics and cartoons. After 1950, in print, on movie screens, and on television, America overflowed with colourful graphic explosions that encapsulated national moods and dreams, responded to historical events and trends, and supplied a gripping visual vocabulary through which such realities could be understood. In this half-course, we will learn to read the strong lines, bright hues, and lean prose of post-war comics and cartoons, (from roughly 1950-today) to discover stories at once epic and everyday, lurid and genial, “normal” and undeniably weird. We will discover that these works do not always reflect the placid face of a triumphant Americanism, but a culture’s macabre fascinations, social anxieties and neuroses, and personal and national insecurities.</p> <p>Beginning at the end of the 1940s with the comic existentialism of Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote, this half-course will explore the turbulent cultural forces that shaped comics and cartoons from the 1950s to today: themes and characters, issues and settings, structures and conflicts. Starting with some basic training in how to recognize and understand their many levels, this course will consider the comics and cartoons of the second part of the twentieth century as a living matrix of national and cultural debate, speculation, and fantasy. We will follow the transition from the “Golden Age” of the superhero into a period of odd and controversial fixations on the shocking, violent, and gruesome. We will consider how early Cold War national insecurity and panic about “un-Americanism,” juvenile delinquency, and moral perversion led to a pivotal crackdown—U.S. Senate hearings and the Comics</p>

	<p>Code of 1954—and a shift in comics and cartoons. This course will explore how such social control was exercised, what forms it took, and what sorts of deviance it targeted. We will pay close attention to the rise of “normal” and the retreat of strong women back to the kitchen as the formula of familial togetherness asserted itself in various ways. We will consider the crucial role comics and cartoons played in the development of the counterculture in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. We will look closely at works from the “Silver Age” of superheroes to see how nuclear family normality conflicts with individual difference and even freakishness and at a range of wittily subversive and psychedelic, “underground” comics. We’ll analyze the resurgence of Batman in the 1980s before concluding with an exploration of the diversity of comics and cartoons in contemporary American society. Throughout, we will interpret the comics and cartoons of the second part of the twentieth century as multi-layered and provocative texts that demand their own reading strategies, treating them as a popular archive of cultural history.</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>Barry, Lynda. <u>The! Greatest! of! Marlys!</u> Kindle edition. Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 2000.</p> <p>Benson, John, ed. <u>The Sincerest Form of Parody: The Best of 1950s MAD.</u> Kindle edition. Seattle: Fantagraphics, 2012. ASIN B013XRZN8U</p> <p>Burns, Charles. <u>Black Hole.</u> New York: Pantheon, 2005. Print only.</p> <p>Clowes, Daniel. <u>Ghost World.</u> Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 1998. Print only.</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>Kidd, Chip. <u>Only What’s Necessary: Charles M. Schulz and the Art of Peanuts.</u> Kindle edition. New York: Abrams, 2003. ASIN B015EZOAKQ.</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>Miller, Frank. <u>Batman: The Dark Knight Returns (30th Anniversary Edition)</u>. Kindle edition. New York: DC Comics, 2016.</p> <p>Ware, Chris. <u>Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid On Earth</u>. New York: Pantheon, 2000. Print only.</p> <p>Additional electronic readings and audio/visual materials posted to Moodle.</p>
Open To:	Years 2, 3, 4+ <i>(Not open to Year 1)</i>