

# Course Outline: Comics and Cartoons I

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH | FALL/WINTER 2026-2027

*Note for students: This short course outline is provided for planning purposes only. Course information is tentative and subject to change; the final course syllabus will be available by the first day of classes.*

## Course Code

AP/EN 2176 3.0A – Comics and Cartoons I: 1900-Cold War in the United States

## Course Description

From the Yellow Kid to Superman, Krazy Kat to Batman, this course explores the emergence of comics and cartoons as one of the defining artistic forms of the twentieth century. Combining words and images in distinctive ways, comics demand their own reading strategies while offering an extraordinary record of American cultural history.

Through newspaper comic strips, animation, comic books, and graphic narratives, students will examine how comics responded to immigration, urbanization, modernism, race, gender, war, censorship, and national identity. Along the way, the course introduces the formal vocabulary of comics—panels, gutters, sequence, closure, page design, and visual style—while developing close reading skills for the interpretation of visual narrative.

Treating comics and cartoons as serious works of artistic and cultural expression, the course investigates how they have shaped—and been shaped by—the social, political, and aesthetic forces of the first half of the twentieth century.

## Course Delivery

Delivery Mode: LECT (In person)

**Lecture:** Wednesdays 9:30-11:20 AM, SLH E

**Tutorial 1:** Wednesdays, 2:30-3:20 PM, TBA

**Tutorial 2:** Wednesdays, 3:30-4:20 PM, TBA

**Tutorial 3:** Wednesdays, 2:30-3:20 PM, VC 106

**[Tutorial 4: Wednesdays, 3:30-4:20 PM, TBA]**

**Informed participation** is not the same thing as attendance, though regular attendance is necessary for meaningful participation. Students are expected to arrive having completed the assigned readings and prepared to contribute thoughtfully to tutorial discussion.

Participation grades reflect the quality, consistency, and preparedness of contributions to discussion. Meaningful participation may take many forms, including asking questions, offering interpretations, drawing connections among readings and course themes, responding constructively to the ideas of others, and helping to sustain a productive intellectual conversation. Students who contribute regularly, thoughtfully, and respectfully should expect to do well in this component of the course.

Tutorials work best when they are collaborative rather than competitive. Contribute your ideas. Listen carefully to the ideas of others. Respond and help others to learn. Let yourself take a chance and be surprised.

## Course Materials

### Required

Finger, Bill and Bob Kane. *Batman Chronicles. Volume 1.* New York: DC Comics, 2013. Kindle ed. \$13.84.

Gray, Harold. *Little Orphan Annie: 1935.* [eClass]

Herriman, George. *The George Herriman Library: Krazy & Ignatz 1919-1921.* Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 2020. Kindle ed. \$15.34.

McCay, Winsor. *Little Nemo in Slumberland. Volume 1: October 15, 1905-January 21, 1906.* Kindle ed. \$2.99.

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art.* New York: William Morrow Paperbacks, 1994. \$30.79.

Siegel, Jerry and Joe Shuster. *The Superman Chronicles Volume 1.* New York: DC Comics, 2013. Kindle ed. \$7.08.

### Recommended

Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth and Thomas J. Sugrue. *These United States: A Nation in the Making: 1890 to the Present.* New York: Norton, 2015. eBook ed. \$58.17. [This book provides useful historical background for many of the texts and topics discussed in the course but is not required for assignments or exams.]

## Tentative Grade Breakdown and Deadlines

| Assessment                          | Weight | Mode      | Tentative Deadline                                                 |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Midterm Examination                 | 25%    | In person | October 28, 2026                                                   |
| Critical Analysis (8 pages)         | 30%    | Take-home | December 2, 2026                                                   |
| Final Examination                   | 35%    | In person | Date TBA during the Fall Examination Period (December 10-23, 2026) |
| Informed participation in tutorials | 10%    | In person | Throughout the course                                              |
|                                     | 100%   |           |                                                                    |

## Additional Information

|                          |                                           |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Category:                | D                                         |
| Historical Requirements: | N/A                                       |
| Open To:                 | EN, CRWR, and ENPR students – Year 2 or 3 |