Course Number & Title: COMM 238: Social History of Comic Books

Instructor's Name: Allan Metz

Prerequisite Courses: None

Course Description: Provides an overview of the intersection of comic books with American popular culture, communication, politics, economics, social history, and history in general. This course forms part of a rotating series of Communication courses on popular culture, including COMM 236: "Rock and Roll: A Survey" and COMM 237: "Music and Politics."

Contact Information:

Email: Use course email exclusively. Contact should be through the Message Center tool within Drury's Learning Management System (Blackboard). I will respond to email within 24 hours.

Course Location Online: http://druryonline.blackboard.com

Required Texts:
The Power of Comics: History, Form, and Culture, Randy Duncan and Matthew J. Smith, Continuum, First Edition. Paperback. ISBN-13: 9780826429360

Instructor's Bio:
I am an online instructor at Drury. One of my major academic interests is popular culture as reflected in this course and a series of other online courses the Communication Department offers (COMM 236: "Rock and Roll: A Survey" and COMM 237 "Music and Politics"). I have edited two books on this theme and a number of published articles. I also teach HIST 101 and a required one-credit online course, LIBR 211: Information Research Skills. I received a B.A. in History, a Masters in Library Science, and a Masters in History. Currently, I am in the process of completing a Masters in Political Science.

Technology:
To be successful in an online course, you must have reliable computer and internet access. It is each student's responsibility to have access to a dependable computer and internet connectivity. It is strongly recommended that, in addition to your standard means of access, you have an alternative plan for acquiring course materials, should your computer fail to function or your internet connectivity becomes disrupted. A Drury campus library is an excellent option if one is nearby; otherwise, most public libraries offer internet access. If you have a laptop computer, then familiarity with local "hotspots" might also serve you well. Develop a plan to address technical problems before they arise.

It is also the responsibility of the student to actively and proactively address technical problems. Be aware that many problems can be addressed simply by using Firefox, the internet browser that most effectively interfaces with Blackboard. Other browsers can be problematic. For example, sometimes people cannot see their own postings when using Internet Explorer.

Firefox is very similar to Internet Explorer, but it has other advantages. For example, many malicious programs are designed to attack Internet Explorer, so using Firefox offers some added degree of protection. You can download Firefox for free at www.mozilla.com.

Finally, if you have further difficulties, here is a link to Drury's technical support Technology Services Support Page which can also be found on the login page under "Helpful Drury Links".

Course Objectives*

The objectives of this course are for you:

- *to learn* the aesthetic principles and standards that guide comics criticism
- *to identify and articulate* major historical developments, genres, and influential figures in the art form's evolution
- *to develop* an appreciation for the creativity and expression exhibited in comics
- *to sharpen* your ability to create written and oral critical responses
- *to appreciate* the diversity and potential of the comic book/graphic novel medium
- *to understand* comic books/graphic novels as a unique medium of communication
- *to discover* the governing principles of comic books/graphic novels as an art form
- *to apply* knowledge of the medium to the creation of comic books/graphic novels
- *to analyze* the role of comic books/graphic novels in American society and culture
- *to identify* the specific cultural, social, and political ties found in comics

*These course objectives have been adapted from those in the syllabi of the following professors: Dr. Matthew J. Smith, Dr. Randy Duncan, and Dr. Alec Hosterman.

Course Schedule: Summer Semester Courses, 2013

	Summer Semester **Student Access to Class:** **May 27, Summer classes** **begin Monday, June 3**	**June 3 – August 2, 2013** **Class Activities** All chapter references are to the course textbook.
B	Week 1: June 3 - 10	Introduction to Online Class, including student introductions. Read Chapters 1 and 2. Initial discussion post (due by 6/8), and reply and follow up posts (due by 6/10).
L	Week 2: June 11 - 17	Read Chapter 3. Initial discussion post (due by 6/15), and reply and follow up posts (due by 6/17).
O	Week 3: June 18 - 24	Read Chapters 4 and 5. Initial discussion post (due by 6/22), and reply and follow up posts (due by 6/24).
C	Week 4: June 25 – June 30	Read Chapters 6 and 7. Initial discussion post (due by 6/28), and reply and follow up posts (due by 6/30).

	Online Summer Break: July 1 - 7	No course activity required, enjoy the break
K	Week 5: July 8 - 15	Read Chapters 8 and 9. Initial discussion post (due by 7/13), and reply and follow up posts (due by 7/15). **PowerPoint Research Presentation Proposal due by July 11.**
	Week 6: July 16 - 22	Read Chapters 10 and 11. Initial discussion post (due by 7/20), and reply and follow up posts (due by 7/22).
2	Week 7: July 23 - 29	Read Chapter 12. Initial discussion post (due by 7/27), and reply and follow up posts (due by 7/29). **PowerPoint Research Presentation due by July 25.**
(8 wk)	Week 8: July 29 – Aug. 2	Read Chapter 13. Initial discussion post (due by 7/31), and reply and follow up posts (due by 8/2).
	Classes end: August 2 Grades Due: August 12	

Announcements:

This feature will be used to post any relevant messages such as notifications, changes to assignments, due dates, instructions, links, updates, or general information to help facilitate your online experience.

PowerPoint Research Presentations:

Any topic that is covered in the course can be selected for the PowerPoint Research Presentation Proposal assignment, which will serve later in the semester as the basis for your final PowerPoint Research Presentation assignment on the same topic. (Due dates are indicated in the Course Schedule above).

Suggestions for selecting a topic would be to review the questions contained in the discussions so far and/or review the textbook to get some ideas. Reviewing the textbook's Table of Contents might be helpful, too.

For more details concerning these two presentations, please access the "Grading Guides" link (located on the left side of any course in the course menu), and scroll down the page.

Class Activities, Interaction, and Participation:

Students are expected to log in frequently during the week to this class and to participate in online discussions/assignments per the schedule above. Much of the learning that occurs during this course happens in the cyber classroom. If you do not log into your course frequently, for whatever reason, you lose the benefit of sharing of knowledge by the faculty and other students. Additionally, the class loses the benefit of your knowledge and experience; thus, the learning experience is diminished and will be reflected in your grade.

Contributions by students to these activities form a rich learning environment that is diminished when students do not participate at this level. Set aside the time to be a collaborative partner in everyone's learning.

Keeping up with the reading assignments and primary source documents is absolutely crucial! You cannot participate in the discussion sessions if you have not completed these readings.

Discussion Board Expectations and Grading Rubric:

Discussion Grading Guide

In order to receive full credit for discussion board postings, all initial discussions, and reply and follow up posts must be made on time. Unless otherwise specified, each week a substantive initial discussion post is due by Saturday at 11:59 PM (Central Time), and at least two substantive reply posts are due by Monday at 11:59 PM (Central Time).

Initial Discussion: You are required to have a substantive initial post to a discussion question.

Reply Comments: In addition to posting your initial discussion, you also are expected to post a minimum of two replies.

Remember to post at least a total of three substantive posts for maximum learning and discussion point awards!

For more details regarding the expectations for each Discussion Board, please access the "Grading Guides" link (located on the left side of any course page in the course menu).

Remember to post early and to post often for maximum learning and discussion point awards!

Summary Listing of Assignments/Grading Schedule

- 8 discussions boards @ 25 pts each = 200 pts
- 1 PowerPoint Research Presentation Proposal = 100 pts
- 1 PowerPoint Research Presentation = 350 pts
  Total Points = 650 pts

Course Grading Scale

Grading Scale Grade	Percentage	Points
A	90 to 100%	585 - 650
B	80 to 89%	520 - 584
C	70 to 79%	455 - 519
D	60 to 69%	390 - 454
F	< 60%	< 389

Assignment Policy:
With the exception of the first and last week, weekly discussion boards and quizzes will be made available by Tuesday. Unless otherwise specified, a substantive initial posting to the weekly discussion board will be due no later than Saturday nights at 11:59 PM (Central Time) with at least one thoughtful response *and* a follow up post which adds to the discussion with thoughtful questions, web or text resources or relevant personal experiences due no later than 11:59 PM (Central time) on Monday nights. The instructor reserves the right to change the listed assignments. Students will be given at least one week notice and a revised syllabus if the listing of course assignments changes.

Instructor Feedback Policy:
Discussion boards usually will be graded by Tuesday of each week. The PowerPoint Research Presentation Proposal and the PowerPoint Research Presentation will be graded within a day or two of their submission.

Late Work:
Due to the nature of this course (only eight short weeks; primarily discussion based) late work cannot be accepted for any credit.

Therefore, no late work or "make ups" will be allowed for the weekly discussion board because they are time-sensitive. In other words, once the "end date" for each week has passed (that is, due by every Monday at 11:59 PM, Central Time), no further posts can be made because the discussion folder will be "locked" and therefore none can be accepted. So please be sure to plan your time accordingly to submit the required posts by their respective due dates because after each Monday will be too late. Similarly, no "make ups" will be allowed for the weekly quizzes or the two exams. See the grading schedule below for more information and for Drury's Incomplete grade policy.

Issuance of an Incomplete Grade:
Only if illness (documentation may be required) or other unavoidable circumstances prevent you from completing the course will I consider awarding an INCOMPLETE. You are responsible for contacting me to work out a schedule for removing the "I" grade. Unless we agree to a different schedule, coursework must be completed and the "I" grade replaced with a letter grade within 2-3 weeks after the end of the course.

Academic Honesty
Academic dishonesty undermines the values of Drury University as well as the educational endeavor. Dishonesty and theft of any kind are not to be tolerated, but the act of cheating in academic work is detrimental to the educational process and ultimately cheats both the student involved and the entire community of scholars. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the dean of the college. Please refer to the CGCS catalog for more thorough review of the university's academic dishonesty policy.