

CMLIT 415 GIRLS' COMICS CULTURES

Meeting day/time/place: Tue & Thur / 00:00am / Room 01

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Office hour: Thursdays 3 – 4 pm. Burrowes bldg. #252, Cubicle 10.

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This course is a survey of comics made for and by women in regions where comics industries have flourished and maintained sufficient commercial activity to make room for girls' comics cultures. We will look at the commercial conditions that fostered these cultures, and at the sociopolitical factors that promoted them, regulated them, and sometimes dismantled them. Girls' comics cultures here means comics created by women, for women readerships, and that share aesthetic, thematic, and communal correspondences as cultural phenomena of their respective time period and region. To begin, this course will situate girls' comics cultures within the field of comics studies. Next, the course will concentrate on primary texts from a variety of regions and time periods. Secondary texts include elementary comics theory, psychoanalysis and gender theory, queer readings of mainstream comics, commentary on the field of comics studies, and affective labor theory.

ASSIGNMENTS – GRADING POLICIES:

Class performance: You will receive 2 grades for class performance (halfway, and at the end of the semester). This will reflect frequency of participation, level of preparation shown, overall engagement, appropriateness of performance to an academic setting, (...)

You may be absent up to 4 times in the semester “no questions asked” (illness/injury, family emergency, religious holiday, sports practice, etc). Further absences will impact your Class Performance grade by 2% per absence. At 10 absences, you will fail the course. I reserve the right to excuse further absences on a case-by-case basis should they be notified for *consideration*, via e-mail, **well in advance**.

Presentation (x1): Each presentation will consist of a brief summary of the chosen text, a critical reading of said text, and two questions to kick start class discussion. Presentations must be a maximum of 10 minutes long (including discussion). Students must submit a 1-page outline of their presentation at the end of class (posted on the Canvas forum).

Visual Analyses (x3): Each visual analysis must cover **one** of the prompt images from Canvas (see “visual analyses prompts” under Modules). Use the “how to do a visual analysis” file as a guide (also on Canvas under Modules). Visual analyses are to be submitted by one of the 6 deadlines spread out throughout the semester. Which deadline you want to meet is up to you, so plan ahead of time. Each deadline corresponds to the end of a unit. You must write on said unit. Visual analyses must be written in 12pt Times New Roman font, single spaced, on a minimum of 1.5 pages and a maximum of 2 pages (see “visual analysis examples” on Canvas under Modules).

Exams (x2): Will include multiple choice questions and a few short open ended questions in which you will need to: 1) show that you have done the primary readings, 2) show that you have paid attention/taken notes in class, and 3) show that you can identify and respond to the main arguments of the secondary readings. One exam will happen halfway through the semester, and the other will happen during finals week. Both exams have the same weight grade and will cover their corresponding half of the semester.

Extra Credit (x2 max): Each extra credit will count as 1% extra towards your final grade. Extra credit opportunities include attending the Comparative Literature Luncheon Talk Series, and other events related to the fields of visual studies, comics studies, literature, or women’s studies (TBA). You must e-mail me with a brief summary of the attended event as late as 24hrs after.

GRADING:		GRADE SCALE %:			
Class Performance	25%	94 and above	A	79 – 77	C+
Presentation	10%	93 – 90	A-	76 – 70	C
Visual Analyses	45%	89 – 87	B+	69 – 60	D
Exams	20%	86 – 84	B	59 and below	F
Extra Credit	2%	83 – 80	B-		

COURSE POLICIES / ETIQUETTE

Name/Pronoun Statement: I will gladly address you by your chosen name and gender pronoun. Please advise me on your preference at any point in the semester if there is a change.

Communications: You are expected to be clear, courteous, and concise in all e-mail communications with me; this includes starting your message with a salutation (I prefer “Dear Camila” to “Dear Ms. Gutierrez”, but either is fine), briefly explaining the reason for your message, following standard rules of spelling and grammar, and signing your e-mail with your full name. I do not check my e-mail after hours, and I may take a couple of days to reply to messages. Do not wait until last minute to ask important questions!

Electronic Devices: Phones are allowed in the class for Nearpod or Kahoot! learning moments. Otherwise, they must be kept on silence and out of sight. Laptop use is allowed for course related purposes (no checking e-mails, no online shopping, no doing work for other classes, etc). If it is my impression that you are distracted because of your laptop use, I will ask you to put it away. Repeated offenses will result in lowering your final Class Performance grade.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity: Dishonesty of any kind **will not be tolerated** in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, failing to document sources, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions. See the College policy at <http://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/G-9-academic-integrity.html>.

Note to students with disabilities: Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services. For further information regarding policies, rights and responsibilities please visit the Office for Disability Services (ODS) Web site at: <http://equity.psu.edu/ods>. Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable accommodations.

Registration policy: During the drop-add period at the beginning of the semester, the Department of Comparative Literature encourages students to visit this and other courses in order to make informed judgments about which courses to take. After this drop/add period, however, only students registered in the course may remain; no student may late-add (or restore a dropped registration) after the third week of the semester without petitioning the department on a form available in the office, 466 Burrowes Building.

COURSE CONTENTS:

Unit #1. Introduction to Comics Studies.

Readings: *Understanding Comics* by Scott McCloud, *The Unflattering* by Nick Sousanis, short comics series for reading mechanics. "[Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narrative](#)" in *PMLA* by Hillary Chute.

- 1.1 The medium; mechanics.
- 1.2 The field of comics studies.
- 1.3 World graphic narratives from antiquity (proto-comics).

Unit #2. Region: Franco-Belgian.

Readings: *Tintin* by Hergé, *Marie Antoinette: Phantom Queen* by Annie Goetzinger, "Ah! Nana" comics by Kate Miller or Cecilia Capuana (English translations to be taken from Wimmens Commix).

The Comics Forum entries on "Ah! Nana" [Catriona McLeod](#) and [Trina Robbins](#).

- 1.1 The Franco-Belgian industry; history, ages, and major works (ref: *Comics a Global History*).
- 1.2 Exceptional women of the Bande Desinee: Annie Goetzinger, and [Claire Bretecher](#).
- 1.3 Explicit women and industrial reactions: "Ah! Nana". [Link 1](#), [Link 2](#), [Link 3](#).

Unit #3. Region: Anglo Europe.

Reading: *Bunty* comics. *Secret Agent* comics.

"What Bunty did next: exploring some of the ways in which the British girls' comic protagonists were revisited and revised in late twentieth century comics and graphic novels" in *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* by Mel Gibson.

- 1.1 History of British comics: from Rodolphe Topffer to Fleetway Super Library.
- 1.2 Girls' comics: bizarre monstrosity for girls who'll never marry.

Unit #4. Region: Anglo America.

[Wimmen's commix](#) issues #1 and #14. Excerpts from *One! Hundred! Demons!*, *Can't we talk about something more pleasant?*, *Fun Home*, and *Skim*.

"Article" (on queer and transgender readings of Wonder Woman).

- 1.1 Wimmen's commix: history, production and circulation, legislation.
- 1.2 Women in mainstream comics: the superhero genre under a transgender lens.
- 1.3 Graphic novelists and cartoonists: scrapbooking (Linda Barry), cartooning (Roz Chast / Bechdel), biography (Allison Bechdel), fiction (Mariko and Jillian Tamaki).

Unit #5. Region: East Asia.

Readings: *The Tale of Genji* by Waki Yamato. *Han Shin* and *Iguana Girl* by Moto Hagio. *What did you Eat Yesterday?* by Fumi Yoshinaga. *13 Dots* by Lee Wai Chun, *Hong Kong Comics* introduction by Wendy Siuyi Wong.

“Opening the Closed World of Shojo Manga” by Mizuki Takahashi. Selections on Affective Labor from *Straight from the Heart* by Jennifer Prough. “Prewar Girls’ Culture (Shojo Bunka) 1970 – 1937” and “The Emergence of the Shojo and the Discourse of Spiritual Love in Meiji Literature” from *Passionate Friendship* by Deborah Shamoon. “Short Skirts and Superpowers: The Evolution of the Beautiful Fighting Girl” by Kathryn Hemman, “An Introduction to Boys Love in Japan” by McLelland and Welker, “A Genealogy of Boys Love: The Gaze of the Girl and the *Bishonen* Body in the Prewar Images of Takabatake Kasho” by Barbara Hartley. [“Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”](#) by Laura Mulvey.

- 1.1 Meiji, Showa, and Taisho era girls’ visual culture.
- 1.2 Girls’ culture in the Heisei Era: affective labor, fighting girls, and those who don’t fit.
- 1.3 Boys Love: the gendered gaze, fujoshi and fudanshi fandoms.
- 1.4 Hong Kong Comics: bootlegs and adaptations after the Cultural Revolution.

Unit #6, Region: Hispanic Europe and Latin America

Readings: [El Mundo de Esther](#) and *Las Nuevas Aventuras de Esther*, “Esther cumple cuarenta” by [Purita Campos](#). *Soledad* by Rafael Cortiella, *Let Me Call You* by Pia Prado Bley, [Aimatos](#) by Rowein, *Bicharracas* and *Historia Ilustrada de un Embarazo* by Soledad Díaz.

How to Read Donald Duck by Dorfman and Mattelart, excerpts from *A Theory of Adaptation*, by Linda Hutcheon.

- 1.1 Historical overview: Spanish exports, Latin American golden age.
- 1.2 Audiences old and new.
- 1.3 Adaptation: Migration, adaptation, and appropriation of foreign aesthetics.
- 1.4 Reversing the information flow: southern authors in the north.