

ENGL-230: THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

Effective Term

Fall 2026

CC Approval

12/05/2025

AS Approval

12/11/2025

BOT Approval

12/18/2025

COCI Approval

02/12/2026

SECTION A - Course Data Elements
CB04 Credit Status

Credit - Degree Applicable

Discipline

English (Master's Degree)

And/Or

Subject Code

ENGL - English

Course Number

230

Department

English

Division

Language and Developmental Studies (LADS)

Full Course Title

The Graphic Novel

Short Title

The Graphic Novel

CB03 TOP Code

1501.00 - English

CIP Code

23.0101

CB08 Basic Skills Status

NBS - Not Basic Skills

CB09 SAM Code

E - Non-Occupational

Rationale

Update prerequisite.

SECTION B - Course Description

Catalog Course Description

This course is a survey of graphic literature as literary and artistic form. The course will examine conventions of form and genre so students can explore the types of stories being told through this unique, vital medium and the effects they have on the reader. The course will also review the literary and artistic techniques used in composing graphic narratives, and use formal analysis and critical approaches to analyze the ways historical, social, economic, psychological, and aesthetic forces shape graphic literature. Focus will be on graphic novels, but will also explore other graphic narratives such as comics and digital comics.

SECTION C - Conditions on Enrollment

Open Entry/Open Exit

No

Repeatability

Not Repeatable

Grading Options

Letter Grade or Pass/No Pass

Allow Audit

Yes

Requisites

Prerequisite(s)

Completion of ENGL-C1000 or ENGL-120B with a minimum grade of C or appropriate placement.

Requisite Justification

Requisite Description

Course Not in a Sequence

Subject

ENGL

Course

C1000

Level of Scrutiny

Content Review

Upon entering this course, students should be able to:

- A. Think, read, and write critically about a variety of ethical, civic, and cultural topics.
- B. Write unified, coherent, well supported, and grammatically correct documents while also demonstrating adequate research skills, including locating, evaluating, integrating, and documenting sources using discipline appropriate styles, such as MLA.

Requisite Description

Course Not in a Sequence

Subject

ENGL

Course

120B

Level of Scrutiny

Content Review

Upon entering this course, students should be able to:

- A. Think, read, and write critically about a variety of ethical, civic, and cultural topics.
- B. Write unified, coherent, well supported, and grammatically correct documents while also demonstrating adequate research skills, including locating, evaluating, integrating, and documenting sources using discipline appropriate styles, such as MLA.

SECTION D - Course Standards

Is this course variable unit?

No

Units

3

Lecture Hours

54

Outside of Class Hours

108

Total Contact Hours

54

Total Student Hours

162

Distance Education Approval

Is this course offered through Distance Education?

Yes

Online Delivery Methods

DE Modalities	Permanent or Emergency Only?
Entirely Online	Permanent
Hybrid	Permanent
Online with Proctored Exams	Permanent

SECTION E - Course Content

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:	
1.	Demonstrate through explication, interpretation, and/or analysis an understanding of the textual and visual components of graphic literature.
2.	Demonstrate through explication, interpretation, and/or analysis a basic understanding of the historical contexts, cultural perspectives and major themes informing graphic literature.

Course Objectives

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:	
1.	Define and apply basic vocabularies of graphic storytelling and literary analysis.
2.	Demonstrate critical reading skills and comprehension of graphic texts.
3.	Articulate and analyze genre differences within graphic storytelling.
4.	Interpret selected works using various critical approaches and contexts.
5.	Compose written textual analyses that show an understanding of the historical and cultural perspectives and their significance to individual texts or graphic literature in general.

Course Content

1. Characteristics common to graphic literature
 - a. Definition of the medium
 - b. Types of graphic literature, possibly including the following: superhero, coming-of-age stories, memoir, manga, experimental, digital
2. Vocabulary of literary elements and graphic literature

- a. Literary elements
 - i. Character
 - ii. Setting
 - iii. Theme
 - iv. Narration
 - v. Symbolism
 - b. Graphic elements
 - i. Page layout
 - ii. Panel structure and pacing
 - iii. Drafting style
 - iv. Transitions
 - v. Use of color
3. Relevant contexts
- a. Historical
 - i. From superheroes to sequential art (1930's-1970's)
 - ii. Underground comics (1960's-1980's)
 - iii. Alternative comics (1990's)
 - iv. Contemporary graphic novel
 - v. Setting of narrative itself (for example the Hiroshima bombing in *Barefoot Gen*)
 - b. Social/Cultural
 - i. Gender
 - ii. Nationality
 - iii. Race
 - iv. Sexual orientation/identification
 - v. Disability
 - vi. Age
 - vii. Religion
4. Major figures in graphic literature
- a. Contribution of major writers, possibly including: Lynda Barry, Kate Beaton, Alison Bechdel, Thi Bui, Daniel Clowes, Neil Gaiman, Jason Lutes, Scott McCloud, Alan Moore, Keiji Nakazawa, Marjane Satrapi, Art Spiegelman, Chris Ware
5. Literary Research
- a. Secondary Sources
 - b. MLA Documentation

Methods of Instruction

Methods of Instruction

Types	Examples of learning activities
Discussion	Reading Discussion, Critical Discussion
Activity	Reflection activity, essay preparation activity, analysis activity
Group Work	Peer review, group analysis of texts
Lecture	Historical context lecture, genre lecture, author introduction lecture, textual analysis lecture

Online Adaptation

Types	Examples of learning activities
Activity	Reflection activity, essay preparation activity, analysis activity as Canvas assignments
Discussion	Perusall discussion, Canvas discussion boards, Zoom discussions
Group Work	Canvas peer-review, Canvas discussion boards
Lecture	Zoom lecture, recorded mini-lecture videos

Instructor-Initiated Online Contact Types

Announcements/Bulletin Boards
Chat Rooms

Discussion Boards
E-mail Communication
Video or Teleconferencing

Student-Initiated Online Contact Types

Chat Rooms
Discussions
Group Work

Course design is accessible

Yes

Methods of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation

Types	Examples of classroom assessments
Essays/Papers	literary analysis essays, formal research essays
Exams/Tests	short answer and timed writing essay exams
Homework	reading and annotation assignments, reflections, comic journal and analysis assignments
Oral Presentations	discussion leading, research presentations
Projects	formal research projects

Assignments

Reading Assignments

Students will be required to read approximately 50-100 pages of a graphic novel or other assigned texts per week.

For Example: Read selected chapters from *Fun Home*. A significant part of this text is Bechdel's understanding and depiction of her parents, and the extent to which those understandings are fluid/changing. How did your perception of the parents evolve or remain static throughout the text? How does Bechdel portray her father's sexuality in various ways? Cite specific pages and/or panels to support your analysis.

For Example: Compare the use of graphic narratives to communicate major historical events: WWII and the Holocaust in Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, with the Vietnam War in Thi Bui's *The Best We Could Do*. What is the role of art in processing history and/or trauma?

For Example: discuss Ware's use of stream of consciousness narration in *Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth* as it pertains to the themes of dreams and fantasy.

Writing Assignments

Students will write response papers, in-class and out-of-class essays, analyzing the literature and its context. Word count for the semester should total approximately 4000 words.

For Example: Write an essay performing a close reading of *Watchmen*. In this analysis, you will explain how formal details (visual and textual) of the text contribute to the larger themes.

For Example: Analyze how *Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth* both upholds and subverts the conventions of superhero narratives. Is this a "superhero" story?

For Example: Compare and contrast two graphic memoirs from the following list: *Maus*, *Fun Home*, *The Best We Could Do*, *Ducks*, *Persepolis*, *Good Talk*. How do these authors treat the themes of time and memory as they communicate both personal and political histories?

SECTION F - Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Material Type

Textbook

Author

Scott McCloud

Title

Understanding Comics

Publisher

Harper-Perennial

Year

1994

Rationale

classic text

Material Type

Textbook

Author

Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons

Title

Watchmen

Publisher

DC Comics

Year

1986-1987

Rationale

Classic Text

Material Type

Textbook

Author

Alison Bechdel

Title

Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic

Publisher

Mariner Books

Year

2006

Rationale

Classic Text

Material Type

Textbook

Author

Chris Ware

Title

Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid On Earth

Publisher

Pantheon Books

Year

2000

Rationale

Classic Text

SECTION G - Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity

How does your course and/or course outline of record reflect strategies for accommodating and engaging diverse student populations, advancing equitable outcomes, and fostering inclusion for all students?

Needs DEI Statement.

Course Codes (Admin Only)**CB00 State ID**

CCC000652260

CB10 Cooperative Work Experience Status

N - Is Not Part of a Cooperative Work Experience Education Program

CB11 Course Classification Status

Y - Credit Course

CB13 Special Class Status

N - The Course is Not an Approved Special Class

CB23 Funding Agency Category

Y - Not Applicable (Funding Not Used)

CB24 Program Course Status

Program Applicable

Allow Pass/No Pass

Yes

Only Pass/No Pass

No