

# Graphic Literature: Image, Text, and the In-between

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Priel Cohanim, [cohanimp@post.bgu.ac.il](mailto:cohanimp@post.bgu.ac.il)

Department of Foreign Literatures and Linguistics

Building 74, Room 522

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:00-14:00

## Course Description

### **2 Credit Points, Elective Course**

This course will introduce students to practices of close reading in graphic literature. Together we will learn about visual literary devices, such as panels, gutters, page-turn reveals and page composition, and consider the ways they produce meaning and inform our approaches to literary analysis. Through a reading of a selection of primary texts, we will consider structural and thematic questions that arise from the combination of text and imagery. We will also learn how to engage with secondary sources about graphic literature, how to develop a critical response to the theories explored in them, and how to apply them to primary texts.

**Keywords:** comics; manga; graphic novel; visual analysis; close reading; themes; structure

## Requirements and Grade Distribution

### **Attendance is required**

10% - Active participation

10% - Short weekly reading journals (full credit if submitted)

5% - Response paper on a primary text (1 paragraph)

15% - Working with secondary sources (2 paragraphs)

60% - Final paper (5 pages)

## Plagiarism

**I absolutely do not tolerate plagiarism. If you plagiarize any of your works, I will not grade it and might file an official complaint with the university's disciplinary committee.**

## Primary Texts

- Greg Rucka & J. G. Jones, *Wonder Woman: The Hiketeia*
- Greg Rucka & J. H. Williams III, *Batwoman: Elegy*
- Hiromu Arakawa, *Fullmetal Alchemist*, Volumes 1 & 2.
- Scott Snyder & Greg Capullo, *Batman, The New 52*, Volume 1: The Court of Owls.
- Scott Snyder & Greg Capullo, *Batman, The New 52*, Volume 2: The City of Owls.

## Secondary Texts

We will read excerpts from the following texts:

- Cohanim, Priel. "Informed Reading and Resisting Canonicity in DC Comics' *Flashpoint*." *Freed from the Shackles of Any History: Archival Practices in DC Comics' Flashpoint*. September 2020. Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, MA thesis, pp. 39-68.
- Curtis, Neal. "Wonder Woman's Symbolic Death: On Kinship and the Politics of Origins." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 307-20.
- Gallacher, Lesley-Anne. "(Fullmetal) Alchemy: The Monstrosity of Reading Words and Pictures in Shonen Manga." *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 18, no. 4, 2011, pp. 457-73.
- Labio, Catherine. "What's in a Name? The Academic Study of Comics and the 'Graphic Novel'." *Cinema Journal*, vol. 50, no. 3, 2011, pp. 123-6.
- Petrovic, Paul. "Queer Resistance, Gender Performance, and 'Coming Out' of the Panel Borders in Greg Rucka and J. H. Williams III's *Batwoman: Elegy*." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, vol. 2, no. 1, June 2011, pp. 67-76.

- Rabkin, Eric S. "Reading Time in Graphic Narrative." *Teaching the Graphic Novel*, edited by Stephen E. Tabachnick, The Modern Language Association of America, 2009, pp. 36-43.
- Smith, Greg M. "It Ain't Easy Studying Comics." *Cinema Journal*, vol. 50, no. 3, 2011, pp 110-2.

Further recommended reading:

- Chute, Hillary. "Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narrative." *PMLA*, vol. 123, no. 2, 2008, pp. 452-65.
- Donaldson, Eileen. "Femininjustice: Female Justice as Monstrous in *Wonder Woman: The Hiketeia*." *Extrapolation*, vol. 60, no. 2, 2019, pp. 157-82.
- Eisner, Will. *Comics and Sequential Art*. Poorhouse Press, 1985.
- McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. HarperPerennial, 1994.
- Ndalianis, Angela. "The Frenzy of the Visible in Comic Book Worlds." *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2009, pp. 237-48.
- Pedler, Martyn. "The Fastest Man Alive: Stasis and Speed in Contemporary Superhero Comics." *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2009, pp. 249-263.
- Stein, Daniel. "Can Superhero Comics Studies Develop a Method? And What Does American Studies Have to Do with It?" *Projecting American Studies: Essays on Theory, Method, and Practice*, edited by Frank Kelleter and Alexander Starre, Universitätsverlag Winter, 2018, pp. 259-71.
- Worden, Daniel. "The Politics of Comics: Popular Modernism, Abstraction, and Experimentation." *Literature Compass*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2015, pp. 59-71.

## Texts for the Final Paper (Provisional List)

Students may write their final paper on one of the primary texts discussed in class or on any of the following texts.

- Alan Moore & Brian Bolland, *Batman: The Killing Joke*
- Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*
- Art Spiegelman, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*
- Frank Miller, *The Dark Knight Returns*
- Geoff Johns, et al. *Flashpoint*
- Greg Rucka & J. G. Jones, *Wonder Woman: The Hiketeia*
- Greg Rucka & J. H. Williams III, *Batwoman: Elegy*
- Hajime Isayama, *Attack on Titan (Shingeki no Kyojin)*
- Hiromu Arakawa, *Fullmetal Alchemist*
- Jeph Loeb, Jim Lee & Scott Williams, *Batman: Hush*
- Koyoharu Gotōge, *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba*
- Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*
- Mark Crilley, *Brody's Ghost*, Books 1-6
- Mark Waid, et al. *Superman: Birthright*
- Mark Waid & Alex Ross, *Kingdom Come*
- Masashi Kishimoto, *Naruto*
- Norihiro Yagi, *Claymore*
- Scott Snyder & Greg Capullo, *Batman, The New 52*
- Scott Snyder, Greg Capullo, et al., *Dark Nights: Metal*
- Scott Snyder, Greg Capullo, et al., *Batman: Last Knight on Earth*
- Tite Kubo, *Bleach*
- Tom Taylor, Trevor Hairsine & Stefano Gaudiano, *DCEASED*
- Tsugumi Ohba & Takeshi Obata, *Death Note*