



**Course Name:** Readings in the Graphic Novel  
**Course Number:** AH 3875 01  
**Class Meets:** R, 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM, 08/28/17 - 12/15/17  
**Classroom Location:** 432

**Faculty Name:** Pistelli, John  
**MCAD Email Address:** jpistelli@mcad.edu  
**MCAD Telephone Number, Academic Affairs:** 612-874-3694  
**Office Hours:** R, 5:30-6:30  
**Office Location:** 306

**Faculty Biography:**

John Pistelli holds a PhD in English literature from the University of Minnesota. His academic interests include modern and contemporary fiction, literary modernism, literary theory and aesthetics, comics, and creative writing. His fiction, criticism, and poetry have appeared in *Rain Taxi*, *The Millions*, *Revolver*, *Winter Tangerine Review*, *The Stockholm Review of Literature*, *Atomic*, *Five2One*, *The Amaranth Review*, and elsewhere. He is also the author of *The Ecstasy of Michaela* (Valhalla Press).

**Course Description:**

The graphic novel is an art form that offers the best of both worlds. While gaining legitimacy as a literary/art form, it retains the excitement and unique properties of reading a comic book. Students in this course read, discuss, and analyze five graphic novels, as well as engage in extensively critical scholarship on and about the graphic novel form. Looking at graphic novels in the genres of mystery, superhero, manga, memoir, and works beyond categorization, students examine how these stories are structured: the forms of novel, novella, and short story help differentiate and explain the subtleties of these forms. The class focuses on social, structural, and thematic issues of these specific texts and explores the possibilities of the form itself. Prerequisite: Introduction to Art and Design: History 2

**Outcomes:**

1. Students will improve writing and research skills. Students will increase their capacity for academic writing and critical thinking in an academic model.
2. Students will learn the nuances of the graphic novel, in terms of the factors that set it apart from other art forms and other narrative forms.
3. Students will learn about genre, story type and character, as reflected in assigned texts and related works
4. Students will apply this understanding to related art and literary forms.

**Methodologies:**

Lecture, Discussion, Readings, Research/Analysis, Screenings, In-class Exercises, Group Projects, Writing Assignments

**Required Textbooks:**

Kyoko Okazaki, *Helter Skelter: Fashion Unfriendly* (ISBN: 978-1935654834)  
Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, *Watchmen* (ISBN: 978-1401245252)  
Carla Speed McNeil, *Finder*, vol. 1 (ISBN: 978-1595826527)  
Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (ISBN: 978-0618871711)  
Marguerite Abouet and Clément Oubrerie, *Aya: Life in Yop City* (ISBN: 978-1770460829)  
Blutch, *Peplum* (ISBN: 978-1590179833)  
Ronald Wimberly, *Prince of Cats* (ISBN: 978-1632159267)

**Library Reserve Information:**

All books will be on two-hour reserve in the library.

**Materials and Tools list:**

1. Textbooks
2. Laptop for Blackboard participation and course presentation as well as writing and submitting written assignments

**Blackboard:**

[https://learn.mcad.edu/webapps/blackboard/execute/courseMain?course\\_id=\\_9520\\_1](https://learn.mcad.edu/webapps/blackboard/execute/courseMain?course_id=_9520_1)

**Assignments/Deliverables:**

One presentation; ten discussion board posts; two essays (with process components: drafts, proposals, etc.)

**Course Calendar:****WORLDS OF THE GRAPHIC NOVEL**

August 31

PROLOGUE: Course information

September 7

READING: Kyoko Okazaki, *Helter Skelter: Fashion Unfriendly*

**FANTASY WORLDS**

September 14

READING: Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, *Watchmen*

ASSIGNMENT: Presentation #1

September 21

READING: Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, *Watchmen*

ASSIGNMENT: Presentation #2

September 28

READING: Carla Speed McNeil, *Finder*

ASSIGNMENT: Presentation #3

October 5

READING: Carla Speed McNeil, *Finder*

ASSIGNMENT: Presentation #4

October 12

ASSIGNMENT: Peer review and writing workshop (bring 3 copies of your essay #1 draft)

**REAL WORLDS**

October 19

READING: Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*

ASSIGNMENT: Presentation #5

Essay #1 due to [jpistelli@mcad.edu](mailto:jpistelli@mcad.edu), October 20 by 11:59PM

October 26

READING: Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*

ASSIGNMENT: Presentation #6

November 2

READING: Marguerite Abouet and Clément Oubrerie, *Aya: Life in Yop City*

ASSIGNMENT: Presentation #7

November 9

READING: Marguerite Abouet and Clément Oubrerie, *Aya: Life in Yop City*

ASSIGNMENT: Presentation #8

**LITERARY WORLDS**

November 16

READING: Blutch, *Peplum*

ASSIGNMENT: Presentation #9

November 30  
READING: Ronald Wimberly, *Prince of Cats*  
ASSIGNMENT: Presentation #10

December 7  
ASSIGNMENT: Research/writing workshop

December 14  
EPILOGUE: Course evaluations  
ASSIGNMENT: Essay #2 due to [jpistelli@mcad.edu](mailto:jpistelli@mcad.edu), December 14 by 11:59PM

**Email Usage:** Email is used at MCAD as the official means of communicating with the student body. Official college announcements regarding policy, classes, registration, deadlines, etc. are delivered via email. Students are expected to check their MCAD email frequently and are held responsible for all official information communicated to them via the email system. Misuse or misrepresentation of official communications by students will result in disciplinary action.

**Attendance:** MCAD students are expected to attend and participate in all enrolled courses in order to complete the courses successfully. To uphold this expectation, there are no unexcused absences. Students have a responsibility to the group and for their own learning. Participation and performance are factored into the course grade. Absences and repeated tardiness has consequences that will result in lowered or failing grades. Students are responsible for obtaining class materials. Faculty are not obligated to reteach a class a student has missed. Faculty may drop a student from a course who does not attend the first class meeting. Therefore, students risk losing their spot to another student. In the case of extended illness or other legitimate absences that may keep the student from attending class, students must contact their faculty member. Faculty members will alert their department chair.

**Grading Policy:** Grades consider student performance of assignments listed on each course syllabus, participation in class, magnitude of improvement, attendance, level of project difficulty, timeliness of project completion, compliance with class policies, and effort/dedication.  
A = Excellent work, progress far beyond expectations of effort and outcomes, full participation  
B = Good work, course requirements completed, preparedness for more advanced study  
C = Average work, course requirements completed, preparedness for more advanced study  
D = Passing but below average work, some promise of improvement  
F = Work not acceptable, or course requirements not completed

**Grading Procedure / Criteria:**

Grading will be based on four areas (more detail about assignments will be given in class):

1. 10% in-class participation (this includes being prepared for class, speaking in class, attending office hours, completing all assignments)
2. 10% online participation (you will be required to post once a week to Blackboard with a choice of passage for discussion and possibly some analysis)
3. 30% presentation (each student will, in a group of two, present on a graphic novel not assigned in the course; the group's choice must have my approval, and the presentation must be supplemented by a report submitted to me the week after the presentation)
4. 50% papers (students will submit a midterm and a final essay on one or more of the course texts; there will also be a process component to this assignment and a research component to the final essay)

**Academic Deficiencies:** MCAD notifies students of deficiencies in academic performance throughout the semester. Notices are placed in student mailboxes. Students are encouraged to contact the faculty member immediately and take steps to remedy the deficiency. If a student has two or more deficiencies at the mid-semester the student will be contacted by the Dean of Student Affairs. A subsequent meeting will be scheduled to help the student analyze the problem and make realistic plans to remedy the situation and succeed in school.

**Midterm Grade Notification:** All students will receive from their faculty member notification of current standing at the midpoint of the semester.

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This information is taken from the Student Handbook. You are expected to adhere to college policy.

A. THE LEARNING CENTER: The Learning Center provides interdisciplinary support for all MCAD students, including face-to-face and online tutoring, an online writing and learning lab (OWLL), small and large group workshops and in-class presentations, as well as academic accommodation services for students with disabilities. The Learning Center works with students to make them better learners and prioritizes equal access and opportunity for all students. Tutoring areas include writing, software and technical skills, time management, and study skills. For more information on the Learning Center's Hours, instructions for how to make an appointment, and access to the MCAD OWLL, visit [learningcenter.mcad.edu](http://learningcenter.mcad.edu) or call (612) 874-3671.

B. LYND.COM: Students can access a wide variety of online tutorials at Lynda.com using their MCAD login information: <https://intranet.mcad.edu/modules/lynda/>

C. COURSE EVALUATIONS: Course evaluations are an integral part of MCAD curriculum development. Student feedback on courses are instrumental in creating a vibrant, informed, and robust learning community at MCAD. For these, and many other reasons, students are encouraged at the end of the semester to provide extensive feedback on course evaluations.

D. CELL PHONE POLICY (optional): Cell phones should be put on mute or vibrate during class. Calls can be made during breaks, as well as before or after class.

E. CREDIT HOUR DEFINITION: In lecture/discussion courses requiring outside preparation, 1 hour of credit represents 50 minutes contact time each week in class, and 2 hours of work outside of class. Therefore, a 3-credit lecture course requires 2.5 hours in class per week and approximately 6 hours outside of class.

In studio/laboratory courses, 1 hour of credit requires a minimum of 1.5 hours contact hours each week in class and approximately 1.5 hours of work outside of class. Therefore, a 3-credit studio course represents a minimum of 4.5 contact hours in class and approximately 4.5 hours of work outside of class per week.

In online courses, 1 hour of credit requires approximately 3 hours of work per week for all activities (i.e., reading, viewing, making, scanning, responding to discussion threads, collaborating, etc.). Therefore, a 3-credit online course requires approximately 9 hours per week to complete the necessary activities.

F. ATTENDANCE (ONLINE COURSES): Registration for an online course presupposes that the student will attend/fully participate in all online activities. Each student is responsible for meeting all course requirements.

G. CLASSROOM DEVICE USAGE POLICY: Participation in a classroom community has many benefits, but students will also find that along with those benefits come responsibilities:

+ Students are responsible for bringing laptops to class when scheduled to do so.

+ Student laptops should be in good working condition. If a student is experiencing problems with a laptop, it is the student's responsibility to go to Computer Support for help: <https://intranet.mcad.edu/modules/css/?css=1>. Technical difficulties such as problems printing, uploading, saving, or retrieving files do not excuse late or missing work.

+ During classroom discussion, demonstration, or lecture, students should not be connected to network resources unless students are specifically instructed to do so.

+ Chatting, using social media, or emailing is no more acceptable than talking on a cell phone during class time. Non-class related use of a laptop during class time, including working on homework for other courses, may result in restriction of laptop use or a grade penalty.

+ Unless otherwise indicated, students should never use headphones during class time.

+ Students should always store copies of files in two backup locations. Students should never store the only copy of a paper/project on the student server space in case the server is down, and students are unable to access the paper/project.

+ Recording by instructor permission only. See the MCAD Student Handbook for the full policy.

H. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY / SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY: Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in MCAD courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action.

The MCAD Student Handbook defines academic dishonesty as follows: Submission of false records of academic achievement; cheating on assignments or examinations; altering, forging or misusing a College academic record, document or funds; taking, acquiring or using test materials without faculty permission; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records to obtain grades, honors, awards or professional endorsement in a dishonest manner; plagiarizing.

+ Plagiarizing: Quoting uncited materials, visual or written; presenting the work of others as your own; using work of other MCAD students without their express permission.

+ Using the Same Work in Different Courses: Students may not submit the same work for more than one class without the knowledge and consent of all faculty.

+ Consequences for plagiarizing and double submissions may include failing the assignment or the course, or academic probation.

Within this course, a student who is responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to an including an "F" for the course. If students have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, they should consult with their professor.

Using the Same Assignment in Different Courses: Studio projects are assigned and assessed according to the specific learning objectives for each course. Occasionally students may be assigned a project in one course that shares many of the learning objectives of an assignment given in a different course. While turning in the same assignment for two courses is not encouraged, students who wish to do so are required to first notify the faculty member of each course and get permission. Faculty may assign additional requirements. Failure to notify faculty can result in failure of the assignments in both courses.

I. Accessibility and Equal Access: Persons with disabilities have a right to equal opportunity as prescribed by law. MCAD is responsible for creating a barrier-free environment while empowering students to grow toward independence and self-assertion. It is the individual student's responsibility to make their needs known and request accommodation. First-time disclosures must be made via appointment with the Learning Center or via our Disability Disclosure Form. For more information, visit [learningcenter.mcad.edu](http://learningcenter.mcad.edu) or call (612) 874-3671.

J. ARCHIVING YOUR WORK: All students must turn in samples of their work to the class server for each class, every semester. Please follow this naming convention: **LastName\_FirstName\_ProjectTitle.ext**. Ex: oneill\_co\_DrawingA1.png

The media formats should follow MCAD archiving standards, which are found at:

<http://kb.mcad.edu/index.php?category=64>

Samples should be accompanied by a Word document containing relevant information, found at:

<http://kb.mcad.edu/index.php?article=166-Text-Listing>

Intranet.MCAD.edu

MCAD Knowledgebase

Computer support

Archiving Standards for Student work