



**ENG 1131 – Writing through Media: Comics Adaptations and Remixes
Section: 1983 // Fall 2017**

Instructor Name: Charles Acheson

Course Meeting Times: Class: MWF 5 (11:45-12:35) // Viewing: W E1-E3 (7:20-10:10)

Course Meeting Location: Weil Hall 408E for both class and viewings

Office Location and Hours: Turlington Hall TBA // Office Hours: MW 6 (12:50-1:40) & by appt.

Course Website: Canvas

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Course Description:

As the rise of the Marvel and DC cinematic universes bring into stark relief, comics-to-film adaptations about superheroes are immensely popular. Unsurprisingly, then, superhero narratives receive the greatest critical attention in both academic and popular settings. Yet, despite the publicity and box office numbers, these adaptations account for only a small number of comics-based adaptations across all media. This course seeks to ameliorate the discrepancy in attention by focusing primarily on non-superhero adaptations, though we will still attend to the superhero phenomenon. This leads us to three guiding questions for the semester: How does the comics medium lend itself to adaptation with special focus on the structure of the comics page? How do narratives change when they move from their original medium to another? As students of adaptation, how can we use the tenets of adaptation and remix to gain additional understanding of not only media, but also our local and global cultures as well?

During this course, we will explore a plentitude of answers to these guiding questions through various techniques both critical and creative. While we will examine *Spider-Man*—one of the longest running and most adapted superhero narratives ever—we will expand our field of inquiry to include comics of numerous genres including memoir, drama, and science fiction. Moreover, we will engage comics from four of the most vibrant national comics traditions: the United States, France, Japan, and Brazil. Finally, our discussions will include not only film adaptations, but also television, prose, and digital mashups enabled by new media technologies. These discussions will spawn from daily class participation, weekly brief writing assignments, and quarterly projects, which include both essay writing and creating comics.

Course Objectives:

- Students will learn about the architecture of comics, as well as the limits and potential of the medium.
- Students will learn how narratives shift and change as they move through various media.
- Students will gain knowledge as to how adaptation occurs in various cultures.
- Students will engage the media around them to interpret other pieces of media.
- Students will write, listen, and talk during each class meeting.
- Students will enhance their critical thinking abilities through both argumentative writing and creative making.

General Education Objectives:

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) *or* Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- *Composition courses* provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University *Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Required Texts:

The following texts must be acquired by students (any English-language edition is acceptable):

Akira, Vol 1 by Katsuhiro Otomo

Fun Home by Alison Bechdel

Marvel Masterworks: The Amazing Spider-Man Volume 1 by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko

Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace (12th Edition) by Joseph M. Williams and Joseph Bizup

Two Brothers by Gabriel Bá and Fábio Moon

The Brothers by Milton Hatoum

The Complete Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi

The following texts/films/episodes will be made available through class viewings, Canvas, or ARES:

Persepolis (2007 film)

Akira (1988 film)

Spider-Man (2002 film)

Fun Home Rehearsal Script

Selected episodes of *The Simpsons*

Selected episodes of *Spider-Man* 1967, 1994, and 2017 animated series

Bartkira, Vol 1 by James Harvey

Understanding Comics by Scott McCloud

Remix Theory by Eduardo Navas

Assignments (see below for Grading Rubric):

Contrasting the Presentation of Themes in *Persepolis* or *Fun Home* (150 pts) – 1,000 words

For this project, students will compare and contrast the different versions of Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* or Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*. Specifically, students will select a theme and compare and contrast how the comics and the adaptation handle the chosen theme. Students will articulate an argument about the changes made from the comic to the film using both their original thinking and Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* for support.

Analyzing the Eras of *Spider-Man* (150 pts) – 1,200 words

Going into this project, we will read and watch five different iterations of *Spider-Man* across a fifty-five-year span. As students will notice, the general narrative of *Spider-Man* remains the same in each version, but certain images and elements of the various iterations change to according to the cultural milieu of their era. For this project, then, students will analyze how one of the later *Spider-Man* iterations compares to the original with special emphasis on the historical events contemporary to both versions of *Spider-Man*.

Comics Adaptation of a Short Story (150 pts) – 500 words

Having read a prose-to-comics adaptation in *Two Brothers*, this project asks that students adapt a short story of their choosing into a brief four to six-page comic. Although students will not be citing Scott McCloud in the project, they must consider his theorizations on the medium and how they can incorporate his ideas to tell a more compelling narrative. As part of the assignment, students will provide a brief reflection essay explaining their goals for the comic and thought process for the creative decisions they made.

Critical Mashing (250 pts) – 1,200 words

Leading up to this final project, we will have read *Bartkira, Vol 1* (a mashup of *Akira* and *The Simpsons*). The *Bartkira* Project challenges readers to think about the themes and issues present in *The Simpsons* and *Akira* through the lens of the other. As a result, this mashup enables new understandings of both original texts, as well as what they mean. For this project, using texts from the course (one outside text is allowed with permission from instructor), students will produce their own mashup comic similar to *Bartkira*. In addition, students will write a brief essay about the project in which they critically examine how the mashup reveals new understandings of themes within each original piece. All previous assignments (especially weekly journal writings) build toward this final project.

Key Concept Weekly Assignments (100 pts) – 1,500 words

Throughout the semester, students will produce short weekly writings that will address goals. During the first half of the course, students will analyze key concepts taken from Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* as they appear in the comics read for class.

Weekly Thematic Journal Assignments (100 pts) – 1,500 words

Throughout the semester, students will produce short weekly writings that will address goals. During the second half of the semester, these journal entries will shift into brief thematic analysis of the two texts a student intends to use for the Critical Mashing assignment.

Participation (100 pts)

Student engagement and preparedness for each class meeting will be essential for the success of the class. Failure to come prepared will lower this score as well as disengagement during class meetings. Should the need arise, surprise quizzes may be instituted and factored into this score.

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* Each student has three non-penalized absences; however, for each absence after the third, a student's final grade will be lowered by 10%. When a student reaches six absences, they automatically fail the course. Class meetings and viewings count equally toward this attendance policy. Students that are more than ten minutes late to a meeting or viewing will be given a tardiness check. Two checks equal an absence.
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>
3. *Project Format & Submission:* As this is an English course, all essays submitted for grading are expected to meet MLA 8th Edition guidelines. All projects are to be uploaded to the appropriate Canvas drop box before the due date listed. For creative projects, free-to-use scanners are available in the library.
4. *Late Projects:* Projects submitted late will incur a 10% penalty for each day overdue.
5. *Project Maintenance Responsibilities.* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
6. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism.* Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.
7. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.
8. For information on UF Grading policies, see:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
9. *Grade Appeals.* In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
10. *Course Evaluations.* Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
11. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
12. *Classroom Behavior:* Students are expected to respect their peers, the instructor, and the classroom environment. When not used for activities, all phones need to be silenced and put away. Our classroom provides computers for every student, but laptops or other learning

technologies are welcome. During class and viewing times, all technology must be used for the activity at hand exclusively.

13. *UF's policy on Harassment*: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>
14. Most often, our viewing periods will conclude after sunset. For safety, students should enter the following numbers into their phone and familiarize themselves with the services available from both resources:
 - a. University of Florida Police Department: 352-392-1111 (for non-emergencies; for emergencies, call 9-1-1). <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>
 - b. The Student Nighttime Auxiliary Patrol: 352-392-SNAP (7627). <http://www.police.ufl.edu/community-services/student-nighttime-auxiliary-patrol-snap/>
15. This syllabus is subject to change should a need arise.

Calendar

Listed below, you will find some general discussion topics we will address each day and due dates. All assignments are due on the listed day at class time unless otherwise specified.

Week 1: Welcome and <i>Persepolis</i>		Assignments Due:
M 9/21	WELCOME!	
W 9/23	Defining Comics and Adaptations	Read Chapter 1 of <i>Understanding Comics</i>
Viewing	Use this period to finish reading <i>Understanding Comics</i>	
F 9/25	Introduction: <i>Persepolis</i> / Taking Sides in Academic Writing	The Remainder of <i>Understanding Comics</i>

Week 2: <i>Persepolis</i>		Assignments Due:
M 9/28	The Form of <i>Persepolis</i> / Thesis Statements	<i>The Complete Persepolis</i> Book 1
W 9/30	Artistic Style in <i>Persepolis</i> / Key Concept run-through	
Viewing	Watch <i>Persepolis</i> (2007)	
F 10/1	Discuss <i>Persepolis</i>	Key Concept 1

Week 3: <i>Persepolis</i>		Assignments Due:
M 9/4	No Class - Labor Day	
W 9/6	Review Key Concepts / Sketching ideas of themes and contrasting / Using Evidence	<i>The Complete Persepolis</i> Book 2
Viewing	WORKSHOP: Academic/Formal Writing	
F 9/8	Small group sharing on <i>Persepolis</i> themes	Key Concept 2

Week 4: <i>Fun Home</i>		Assignments Due:
M 9/11	Digital Class Meeting (Instructions on Canvas)	
W 9/13	Marginalized Identities in Comics:	<i>Fun Home</i>

	<i>Persepolis</i> and <i>Fun Home</i>	
Viewing	Listen to <i>Fun Home</i> Broadway Recording	
F 9/15	Semiotics of Comics / Incorporating Evidence	Key Concept 3

Week 5: <i>Fun Home</i>		Assignments Due:
M 9/18	Discuss: Differences between <i>Fun Home</i> versions	<i>Fun Home</i> Rehearsal Script
W 9/20	Theater Staging and the Comics Page	Complete Draft of Contrasting Themes Project for Workshop
Viewing	WORKSHOP: Editing and Proofreading	
F 9/22	Introduction: <i>Spider-Man</i> / Free Work on Project	Contrasting Themes Project DUE at MIDNIGHT to CANVAS

Week 6: <i>Spider-Man</i>		Assignments Due:
M 9/25	Discuss: <i>Marvel Masterwork: The Amazing Spider-Man</i> / Silver Age of Comics	<i>Marvel Masterwork: The Amazing Spider-Man</i> Issues 1-3
W 9/27	How Does this Spider-Man change from the present version?	<i>Marvel Masterwork: The Amazing Spider-Man</i> Issues 4-6
Viewing	Watch <i>Spider-Man</i> Television Episodes	
F 9/29	Discussion of television versions of <i>Spider-Man</i> , as well as compared against the original	Key Concept 4

Week 7: <i>Spider-Man</i>		Assignments Due:
M 10/2	Class and <i>Spider-Man</i> , or How Can Peter Parker Suddenly Afford a Penthouse in New York?	<i>Marvel Masterwork: The Amazing Spider-Man</i> Issues 7-9
W 10/4	Small Group: Research the historical event preceding each iteration of <i>Spider-Man</i> and report to the class	Key Concept 5
Viewing	Watch <i>Spider-Man</i> (2002)	
F 10/6	No Class - Homecoming	

Week 8: <i>Spider-Man</i>		Assignments Due:
M 10/9	Reboots and Relaunches, or How Many Times Does Uncle Ben Really Need to Die?	<i>Marvel Masterwork: The Amazing Spider-Man</i> Issues 10-12
W 10/11	Race and Ethnicity in the <i>Spider-Man</i> universe: Miles Morales	
Viewing	WORKSHOP: InDesign and Photoshop	
F 10/13	Digital Class Meeting (Instructions on Canvas)	Analyzing the Eras of Spider-Man Project DUE at MIDNIGHT to CANVAS

Week 9: <i>Two Brothers</i>		Assignments Due:
M 10/16	Brazilian Comics / Intro Thematic	<i>Two Brothers</i> Chapters 1-5

	Journals	
W 10/18	How do Bá and Moon use the medium differently from Satrapi and Lee/Ditko?	Thematic Journal 1
Viewing	Read <i>Two Brothers</i>	
F 10/20	The Uncanny Valley: Bodies in Comics	<i>Two Brothers</i> Chapters 6-Epilogue

Week 10: <i>Two Brothers</i>		Assignments Due:
M 10/23	What decisions do Bá and Moon make when adapting <i>The Brothers</i> ?	<i>The Brothers</i> Chapters 1-3
W 10/25	What does the visual component of comics add or take away from <i>The Brothers</i> ?	<i>The Brothers</i> Chapters 4-5
Viewing	WORKSHOP: Comics Design	
F 10/27	Small Group and Brainstorm: What short story are you using and how can you adapt it?	Thematic Journal 2

Week 11: <i>Two Brothers</i>		Assignments Due:
M 10/30	How would you change <i>Two Brothers</i> now having read a portion of <i>The Brothers</i> ?	<i>The Brothers</i> Chapters 6-7
W 11/1	It's Black and White: How black and white comics approach moral grey areas	<i>The Brothers</i> Chapters 8-10
Viewing	WORKSHOP: Making Your Comic	
F 11/3	Introduce: <i>Akira, Vol 1</i> / Free Work on the Project	Comics Adaptation of a Short Story DUE AT MIDNIGHT to CANVAS

Week 12: <i>Akira</i>		Assignments Due:
M 11/6	No regular class meeting, instead we will have individual meetings with the instructor to discuss your Critical Mashing project.	
W 11/8	Discuss <i>Akira, Vol 1</i>	<i>Akira, Vol 1</i> & Thematic Journal 3
Viewing	Watch <i>Akira</i> (1988)	
F 11/10	No Class - Veteran's Day	

Week 13: <i>Akira</i>		Assignments Due:
M 11/13	Discuss <i>Akira</i> (1988) and "Reflexive Mashups"	"Reflexive Mashups" from <i>Remix Theory</i>
W 11/15	Continue discussing "Reflexive Mashups" / Introduction: <i>Bartkira</i>	Thematic Journal 4
Viewing	Watch episodes of <i>The Simpsons</i>	
F 11/17	Discuss <i>Bartkira</i> / What does <i>Bartkira</i> achieve?	<i>Bartkira, Vol 1</i>

Week 14: <i>Bartkira</i>		Assignments Due:
M 11/20	What are the effects of the <i>Bartkira</i> mashup?	Thematic Journal 5

W 11/22	No Class - Thanksgiving
Viewing	
F 11/24	

Week 15: <i>Bartkira</i>		Assignments Due:
M 11/27	Nuclear Power in <i>Bartkira</i> / Free Work on Project	Critical Mashing Comics DUE AT MIDNIGHT to CANVAS
W 11/29	Urbanity and "Lost Youth" in <i>Bartkira</i>	
Viewing	WORKSHOP: Using Your Comic to Draft Your Essay	
F 12/1	Conclusions and Final Thoughts: The Architecture of Comics and How They Lend Themselves to Adaptation	

Week 16: <i>Bartkira</i>		Assignments Due:
M 12/4	Conclusions and Final Thoughts: Media in Transit / Evaluations	
W 12/6	Conclusions and Final Thoughts: Cultural Networks and Exchanges	
Viewing	No Viewing - Work on Critical Mashing Project	
F 12/8		Critical Mashing Essay DUE at MIDNIGHT to CANVAS

General Assessment Guidelines

A - You successfully completed the assignment at a high quality level, and your work shows originality and creativity. Your paper reveals that you have grappled deeply with the assignment's topic. Your paper is clearly structured, thoroughly supported, and persuasive. The assignment contains no errors in grammar, spelling, and/or syntax.

B - You successfully completed the assignment at a moderately high level. Your paper reveals that you have thought deeply about the assignment's topic and have developed a largely persuasive argument, although your work may need slight revisions in terms of structure and/or content. The assignment is almost completely without errors in grammar, spelling, and/or syntax.

C - While your paper reveals that you have given some thought to the assignment's topic, your paper seems more of a rough draft than a final version and requires substantial revisions, likely in terms of both structure and content, in order to persuade the reader. While your assignment may be readable, it contains some errors in grammar, spelling, and/or syntax.

D - You did what the assignment required of you at a poor quality level. Work in this range needs significant revision. The paper's main ideas are poorly supported, and an organizational structure is difficult to discern. Frequently, writing at this level may suffer from many problems in grammar, spelling, and/or syntax which are so serious as to render portions of the paper nearly unreadable.

E - Papers which earn E's fail to show that the writer has given any consideration to the assignment's topic. The paper offers slim to no support for its argument, and an organizational structure cannot be discerned. The paper contains an unsatisfactory number of errors in grammar, spelling, and/or syntax. Importantly, if any of the paper has been plagiarized, it will also receive a failing grade.

Final Grade Scale

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599