

## Comics and Graphic Novels (A005565)

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits 5.0** **Study time 150 h**

**Course offerings in academic year 2023-2024**

A (semester 1) English Gent

**Lecturers in academic year 2023-2024**

Ahmed, Maaheen	LW07	lecturer-in-charge
Busi Rizzi, Giorgio	LW07	co-lecturer
Crucifix, Benoit	LW07	co-lecturer

**Offered in the following programmes in 2023-2024**

	<b>crdts</b>	<b>offering</b>
<a href="#">Master of Arts in Comparative Modern Literature</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature</a>	5	A

**Teaching languages**

English

**Keywords**

comics, graphic novels, children's magazines, word-image relationships, intermediality

**Position of the course**

This course introduces advanced students to possibilities of studying and researching comics, with a special focus on graphic novels and comics magazines.

**Contents**

The graphic novel has become a staple of the literary scene. It also continues to mystify: is it a work of literature, of visual art? Is it a novel or an art book? What is the difference between comics and graphic novels? Understanding comics as a medium, with graphic novels, albums, comic strips, as different manifestations of the medium, this course seeks to examine comics in all their diversity.

On one hand, the course interrogates the polarities of popular, genre fiction and literary fiction. On the other, it interrogates the differences between literary and cultural products for children and adults and the grey areas where they overlap.

The course is divided into two parts. The first half of the course equips students with basic historical and theoretical tools necessary for analyzing different kinds of comics (comic strips, graphic novels, comics periodicals). The second half comprises of an individual research project developed by the students. Students have the option to choose between graphic novel or comics magazines. For the latter, passive knowledge of French is an advantage. We will work in parallel sessions to discuss the developments of the graphic novel and comics magazine research projects. The results will be communicated through a poster session (for graphic novel projects) and an exhibition (for the comics magazines).

**Initial competences**

Proof of conducting small research projects and writing research papers (ability to formulate research questions and hypotheses, select and apply appropriate methodologies, distill and evaluate results) through, for instance, a BA paper or another research paper of at least 8.000 words.

**Final competences**

- 1 Acquire insight into comics histories and methodologies from comics studies, image analysis and periodical studies for reading different kinds of comics (graphic novels, comics magazines).
- 2 Select, combine and apply relevant methodologies for the study of comics

- 3 Design and conduct a comics-based research project
- 4 Incorporate feedback on different stages of the project (research question and methodology, preliminary analysis, results and presentation of results)
- 5 Give feedback to peers on different stages of the project
- 6 Effectively communicate results through a) brief scholarly texts and presentations and b) an individual poster (graphic novels) or small exhibition (comics magazines from the AVP collection)

**Conditions for credit contract**

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

**Conditions for exam contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

**Teaching methods**

Group work, Seminar, Independent work, Peer teaching

**Learning materials and price****References**

- Jan Baetens and Hugo Frey, *The Graphic Novel: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press 2014.
- Bart Beaty and Benjamin Woo, *The Greatest Comic Book of All Time: Symbolic Capital and the Field of American Comic Books*. Palgrave 2016.
- Barbara Postema, *Narrative Structure in Comics: Making Sense of Fragments*. RIT Press, 2013.
- Thierry Smolderen, *Les naissances de la bande dessinée: de William Hogarth à Winsor McCay*. Les Impressions Nouvelles 2009. English translation: *The Origins of Comics: From William Hogarth to Winsor McCay*. University Press of Mississippi 2014.

**Course content-related study coaching****Assessment moments**

continuous assessment

**Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period****Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period****Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

Participation, Assignment

**Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

not applicable

**Extra information on the examination methods**

Draft texts and presentations based on the research project discussed in small groups throughout the second half of the course. Final essay due in January.

Group exhibition of projects based on the Alain Van Passen comics collection OR poster exhibition of graphic novel projects at the end of the course

**Calculation of the examination mark**