

Contemporary Issues in Literature and Culture: Graphic Novels

Last Updated: Mon, 07/21/2025

Course prefix: LMC

Course number: 3520

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
93437

Instructor First Name: Nihad

Instructor Last Name: Farooq

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

This course will cover a range of possible critical areas of global concern in contemporary literature and culture. Focus will vary each semester. For Fall 2025, the focus will be on the visual and sequential art form of the graphic novel.

Course learning outcomes:

School of LMC Learning Outcomes:

I. Textual Analysis: Students will learn to read, analyze, and interpret cultural projects such as film, literature, art, and media.

II. Interpretive Frameworks: Students will become familiar with a variety of social, political, and philosophical theories and be able to apply those theories to our course readings, as well as to their own cultural observations.

III. Literary/Film/Narrative Art Inquiry: Students will be aware of the traditions and conventions of literature, film, and other forms of narrative art, and they will be able to analyze those traditions and conventions in specific cultural contexts.

IV. Historical Analysis: Students will study literary and cultural texts within an historical framework to become familiar with the various forces that shape artistic and commercial production. They will learn to interpret history actively, rather than passively accepting archival information.

V. Communication Skills: Students will be able to gather, organize, and express information clearly and accurately, with sensitivity to audience. They will be also be able to discuss and describe relationships among cultures, literature, ethics, and the arts.

Required course materials:

Required Texts:

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (2006)

Damian Duffy & James Kincaid, *Kindred* (2018 Adaptation of Octavia Butler's 1979 *Kindred*)

Richard McGuire, *Here* (2014)

Joe Sacco, *Safe Area Goražde* (2000)

Nick Sousanis, *Unflattening* (2015)

Art Spiegelman, *Maus I* (1986)

Grading policy:

Students will attend and participate in class regularly, will lead group presentations throughout the semester, will take one midterm exam, and will produce one culminating, research-based paper or project for this class. All assignment instructions and details will be posted on Canvas and discussed in class at appropriate times throughout the semester. The following are the grading percentages for each component of the class:

· Attendance/Participation	25%
· In-Class Presentation/Discussion Days	20%
· Midterm Exam	25%
· Final Paper/Project	30%

The grading scale for students will be:

- A: 90-100. Students who demonstrate a thorough understanding and skilled, original use of class concepts and terminology. Moreover, they use class concepts and terminology in such a way that they teach us something new about the subject at hand.
- B: 80-89. Students who demonstrate a solid understanding of and ability to use class concepts and terminology. However, they may demonstrate the need to learn more about some aspect of the subject at hand or may need to continue practicing pulling together key concepts and ideas.
- C: 70-79. Students who generally grasp the key concepts and terminology of this class, but cannot yet use them consistently to provide in-depth analysis of class materials.

- D: 60-69. Students who fail to understand or use class concepts and terminology much if at all in class, exams, or projects. They may also fail to provide accurate or in-depth analyses of the topic at hand or texts associated with it.
- F: 0-59. Students who demonstrate a complete lack of understanding about the subject at hand, and/or fail to complete major assignments in an appropriate and/or timely manner.

Attendance policy:

- **Attendance/Participation Policy - 25%**

Attendance and participation are *vital* to the success of this class. Please come prepared to **engage** with the material in a direct way and to share your thoughts on the readings. If you need to miss class for some reason, please email me in advance to let me know. Please note that notifying me of your absence assures me that you are a courteous and committed member of the class. It does *not*, however, in most circumstances, *excuse* your absence. Barring officially excused absences for medical, athletic, or similar [institute-approved absences](#), all students are expected to attend class. Please note that **all** absences count, in some way, in the determination of your final grade. Frequent absences (more than 3) and/or a lack of participation/preparedness will be very detrimental to your final grade – much more than 25%. To be specific, for each additional absence beyond the first three absences, your attendance/ participation grade will be automatically lowered by half a letter grade.

**Please note that laptop and smartphone use are not allowed in class unless they are required as part of an ADA requirement, or if they are being used for class-related purposes (i.e., reviewing the syllabus together, taking notes; screening something we are watching together).*

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Humanities area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content,

and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic and philosophical works?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts in English or other languages, or of works in the visual/performing arts.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Ethical Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Intercultural Competence