

Comics & Graphic Arts

Last Updated: Sun, 01/04/2026

Course prefix: FREN

Course number: 3110

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):

34702

Instructor First Name: Brigitte

Instructor Last Name: Stepanov

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

This course studies French comics as a genre and its interrelationships with graphic arts and literature. Conducted in French.

Course learning outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Master the vocabulary pertaining to graphic arts and visual representation in general
2. Evaluate the importance of comics and visual communication
3. Hone skills to synthesize information, think critically, and perform textual analysis by preparing weekly readings and completing assignments
4. Gain proficiency in French and refine writing and oral communication skills by discussing mature subject matter and sharing reflections and reactions to assigned materials in class
5. Improve research skills and structure a complex argument by responding to a prompt with examples to support your stance for the midterm and engaging in creative thinking for the final project

Required course materials:

René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo. *Le tour de Gaule d'Astérix*. Hachette, 978-2-01-210137-1.

Zeina Abirached. *Je me souviens : Beyrouth*. Cambourakis, 978-2-91-658925-1.

Fabien Toulmé. *L'Odyssée d'Hakim 1. De la Syrie à la Turquie*. Delcourt, 978-2-41-301126-2.

All other needed materials will be posted on the Home Page of our Canvas Site.

Grading policy:

Attendance + participation (in-class discussion, including leading discussion and "mini" presentations) - 30%

In-class Presentation - 8%

Canvas Discussion Posts - $4 \times 3\% = 12\%$

In-Class Midterm - 20%

Final Project (This includes the proposal of the project, the creation of the project itself, the oral presentation of the project and bibliography) - 30%

Description of Graded Components

Participation: Active participation in class and engagement with the assigned materials are vital. Please come to class prepared by having read/watched/listened to the assigned readings/film/music. Before class: Prepare the films/songs/texts at home by watching/reading them, using a dictionary and researching vocabulary/key terms, and completing the assignments as advised in the calendar. Access additional materials and resources on Canvas. Please bring any readings and notes to class.

Participation will be graded on the following scale:

High degree of preparedness and active participation = 10 points

Moderate degree of preparedness and participation = 9 points

In class and making an okay contribution = 7 points

In class, but silent or ill-prepared = 4 points

Unexcused absence = 0 points

In-Class Presentation: Visual and contextual analysis of a section of a graphic novel (with a focus on a vignette), concluding your presentation with an open-ended discussion question.

Canvas Discussion Posts: Canvas Discussion Posts (4 as indicated in the calendar) are due before Wednesday's class (but you may post them at any point before then). Please post a reflection on the materials (either Monday's or Wednesday's) of the week by including at least 2 remarks. Please compose responses in complete sentences, about 150 words in

length. These reflections are also an opportunity for you to include links to other materials; please cite these materials clearly and include links to websites, images, articles, etc. Think about the context of your sources (if you find a newspaper article, consider whether the journal has a well-known political orientation; if you select a TV interview, try to see if it comes from a private or public channel, etc.). You will be graded on content, the format of your reflection (length and citation of materials), and your writing.

Midterm: Writing exercise (both short- and long-answer questions) conducted in class pertaining to class material.

Final Project: Comics/graphic novels/BD are grounded in creativity and experimentation of form. Your final project consists in creating a work grounded in the themes and analyses of the course and presenting it to the class during an oral presentation (with bibliography). The presentation will be followed by a Q+A with the class.

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

- A 90-100% ("Excellent")
- B 80-89% ("Good")
- C 70-79% ("Satisfactory")
- D 60-69% ("Passing")
- F 0-59% ("Failure")

Attendance policy:

You are required to attend class when it convenes, and I will be recording attendance in each class. Exceptions are allowed for Institute-approved absences (for example, those documented by the Registrar) and situations such as hospitalization or family emergencies (documented by the Office of the Dean of Students). Absences and/or excessive tardiness will affect your participation grade – since it is worth a large part of your final grade, please do attend class! If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what happened in class that day and to catch up on the work that you missed.

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 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