Syllabus
History 3332/01 - US Social and Cultural History/AMST 3470 - Comics In American Culture
CRN#s 10846 and 10107
12:30 - 1:45 - SS 2031
PROFESSOR: DR. ELSA A. NYSTROM

OFFICE: Social Science Building, Room 4122
PHONE: 770-423-6149 (office) or 770-423-6294 (History Dept.)
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OFFICE HOURS: MW 9:00 - 12:00, 4:45 - 6:30 or by appointment.

TEXTS: A Rejection of Order; The Development of Newspaper Comics in America Nystrom, Elsa A. (RO)
Note: A copy of my dissertation will be on electronic reserve in the library. Wanted to put it up on Vista but can’t get it to open. However either way, this will save you some money. All books are required
Comic Book Nation. (CBN) Wright, Bradford W.

COURSE OBJECTIVE:
This course is divided into two parts. The first half traces the development of humor and comic strips in the United States, looking at some of the early cartoonist and graphic artists as well as the development of the newspaper and publishing industry during the 19th century. Although comics are found all over the world, newspaper comics developed in a distinctly American fashion as a result of the competition between the penny presses for urban readers. The Sunday Funnies, printed in glorious color soon became a staple of American society and culture. The most popular comic were syndicated and cartoonists became media stars. while comic characters appeared in advertising and other media. We will spend some time looking at the contents of these comics and their creators and their vision of America. Comics have sometimes been controversial and they are a wonderful medium to use in the study of race, class, gender, nationalism, popular culture, consumerism and national identity. In America. The second part of the class will look at the development of comics after WWII. While newspaper comics were censored to some extent, comic books were not. Many were extremely violent and caused a move towards censorship after WWII. A new comic character, the superhero appeared at this time. Superman and the horde that followed him were extremely popular with a different audience than the Sunday funnies. We will look at the development of the comic book industry, and the graphic novel, as well as comic characters in motion pictures. Finally we will take a look at the role comics may play in the future.

COURSE INFORMATION:
WITHDRAWALS AND INCOMPLETES
The last date to withdraw from a course WITHOUT PENALTY is March 5, however, in order to officially withdraw from a course, a student MUST go to the Registrar's office and fill out the necessary form. If a student stops attending a class and doing the coursework without notifying the Registrar, he or she will automatically receive a WF. Only special hardship cases may be permitted to receive a grade of W after March 5 (instead of the WF) and then only with the approval of the Registrar.

The grade of incomplete (I) will only be given to students who have completed at least 75% of their coursework, with a grade of C or better but are unable to complete the rest of their work
for non-academic reasons beyond their control. An incomplete may also be assigned if a student misses the final exam and is otherwise in good standing.

EXAMS

There will be one essay final.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Students are expected to attend scheduled classes. Excessive absence (more than two) is reflected in a student’s grade. If a student has a valid reason for missing class, he or she should inform the instructor. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to participate in class discussions. Readings, lecture and media presentations have been selected to enhance student learning. NO cell phone use in class; computer use only for note taking.

ACADEMIC HONESTY and STUDENT BEHAVIOR:

The high quality of education at Kennesaw State University is reflected in the credits and degrees its students earn. The protection of these high standards is crucial since the validity and equity of the University’s grades and degrees depend upon it. Any student found guilty of an infraction or a regulation for academic honesty shall be suspended for at least one semester unless evidence is provided to convince the court that substantial mitigating circumstances existed in that student’s offense.

The following regulations are designed to assist students in developing appropriate standards and attitudes with respect to academic honesty. To this end, the regulations protect students against infractions that may compromise the validity of their degree or place them at an undue disadvantage with respect to the equity of their grades.

A. Plagiarism and Cheating

NO student shall receive, attempt to receive knowingly give or attempt to give unauthorized assistance in the preparation of any work required to be submitted for credit as part of a course (including examinations, laboratory reports, essays, themes, term papers, etc.) When direct quotations are used, they should be indicated; when the languages, ideas, theories, data, figures, graphs, programs, electronic based information or illustrations of someone other than the student are incorporated into a paper or used in a project, they should be duly acknowledged.

B. Unauthorized Access to Official University Materials

NO student shall take or attempt to take, steal, or in an unauthorized manner otherwise procure, gain access to, alter or destroy any material pertaining to the conduct of a class. For further information on Academic Honesty, see the current KSU Catalog.

Any violation of these rules will be dealt with according to KSU policy.

GRADE SCALE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>90 and up</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>80 - 89</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>70 - 79</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>60 - 69</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>59-</td>
<td>F</td>
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GRADES BASED ON THE FOLLOWING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minor writing assignments</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPT presentation and Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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COURSE CALENDAR:

First day of class January 11
Last Day to drop without penalty: March 5
Project due: April 19
Last Day of Class: April 28
Final Exam: May 3, 2 - 4 PM

Major Project Assignment

For this assignment, you have an opportunity to select your topic from a variety of subjects including cartoonists, comic strips, graphic novels, superheroes, comics directed at particular ethnic or racial groups, propaganda comics etc, etc, etc. Let us just say that you have many options to choose from and I hope we won’t get any duplication. However, if more than one of you wants to work on a particular topic, you will have to work together to prevent duplication of effort. You will get to select your topic after the first two weeks of class, so you will have time to work on it. So what do you do with the topic after you have selected it? You will have to produce a 10 page research paper, typed, double-spaced in a 10 or 12 point font, duly footnoted, and including a bibliography AND a 5 minute PPT in which you will get to present the highlights of your research to the class. I am not going to watch your presentation with an egg timer or stop watch in hand, but do stick as close to the time limit as possible. Both of parts of the project will be graded separately, dividing the 40% in half. As I know that many of you are not history majors, I will accept the footnote style used in your major, but history majors have to adhere to the Chicago Manual of Style. If you have concerns about your writing ability, don’t hesitate to visit the English Lab; they are eager to help you with your project, but do explain that you are writing the paper for a history class. Writing styles do vary according to discipline.

Minor Writing Assignments
These assignments are much shorter and more structured. Each requires you to produce a 50 word sentence, following the instructions for each assignment. They are due throughout the class and must be handed in on time for full credit. You will all have to read yours to the class at some time during the semester. Note Well! You must not exceed 50 TYPED words. On every Minor Writing Assignment due date, a few of you will have to read your assignment to the class. (Perhaps 5 people) so be prepared. This will be a random thing.

Lecture Topics, and Weekly Reading Assignments

Week One
January 11 - 13 – American humor or lack of It; the current state of newspaper comics.
Read “Why are comics still in search of cultural legitimization?” CSR, Introduction, RO

Week Two
January 20 (no class on Monday, MLK Day)
#1 minor assignment due.

Week Three
January 25 - 27 - Read Rudolphe Topffer’s Aesthetic Revolution, David Kunzle CSR, How comics came to be, Robert C. Harvey CSR and America Demands to be Amused RO, Chapter 2.
#2 minor assignment due, January 27.

Week Four
February 1 - 3 - RO Chapter 3, Preparing a Medium for the Masses.
Week Five
February 8 - 10 - Read RO Chapter 4, The First Generation Family and their Friends and The vulgar Comic Strip. Gilbert Seldes, CSR
Minor assignment #3 due February 10

Week Six
February 17 (No class Monday)

Week Seven -
February 20 - 22 - Read RO Chapter 5, The Comics an Endangered Species through page 245.
Fourth minor assignment due February 22.

Week Eight
February 22 - 24 - Syndication comes to the comics, RO Chapter 5 from page 246

Week Nine
March 1 - 3 - Read Comic Strips Triumphant, RO Chapter 6 and Chapter VIII (Actually it is Chapter 7) Epilogue and Two Boys from the Twin Cities, M Thomas Inge, CSR
Fifth minor assignment due March 3.

Week 10
March 8 - 10 - Spring Break

Week Eleven
March 22 - 24 - The Birth of the Superhero. Read Superheroes for the Common Man, Chapter 1 CBN and Definition of the Superhero, Peter Coogan, CSR
Sixth minor assignment due March 24.

Week Twelve
March 29 - 31 - Hot and Cold War Comics; Read Race Politics and Propaganda, CBN Chapter 2 and Reds, Romance and Renegades, CBN Chapter 2

Week Thirteen
April 5 - 7 - Read Turning Point, CBN Chapter 6 and Excerpt from Wertham's Seduction of the Innocent and William Gaines and the Battle over EC Comics Amy Kiste Nyberg from CSR.
Seventh minor assignment due April 7.

Week Fourteen
April 12 - 14 - The next step; graphic novels and manga. Read Manga vs. Kibyoshi, Adam L Kern and an Examination of the Master Race, John Benson, David Kasakove, Art Spiegelman. CSR
Eighth minor assignment due April 14.

Week Fifteen - Presentations begin
April 19 - 21

Week Sixteen - Presentations continue.
April 26 - 28

Final Exam - Monday May 3 12:30 - 2:30
Note - The final exam will be a take home and the exam period will be used for presentations if needed.

Minor Writing Assignment Schedule

Assignment #1 due January 20th.
Select one of the comics currently published in the AJC and in a 50 word sentence describe its audience appeal and relevance in today's world. It might be helpful to look up your choice on the web and find out something about its history.

Assignment #2 due January 27
Determine which of the factors described in America Demands to be Amused, RO, Chapter 2, was most "influential in the creation of comics strips and explain your reasoning in a 50 word sentence.

Assignment #3 due February 10
In fifty words, in your opinion, which of the early comics (from the first decade) was the most successful and why?

Assignment #4 due February 24
In the usual fifty words, why did many want to ban comics in the first and second decades of the Twentieth century?

Assignment #5 due March 3
In the requisite fifty words explain how syndication changed comics.

Assignment #6 due March 24
In fifty words, explain the difference between the early and later superheroes.

Assignment #7 due April 7
In the usual fifty words explain the differences between the earlier and later critics of the comics.

Assignment #8 due April 14
And for your final fifty word assessment, explain why the graphic novel and manga have such a great appeal today.