The Graphic Novel, ENG 3402 / 5556: Monday and Wednesday, 2:30-3:45, Fall 2012, Namm 605
Professor Rebecca Devers (rdevers@citytech.cuny.edu)
Office hours: Mon and Wed 4-5 PM; Tues 1-2 PM; and by appointment
Office location: Namm 528 // Mailbox location: Namm 512 // Office phone: 718-260-5118

Prerequisites: Students who enroll in this course must have successfully completed either ENG 1121 or ENG 2000. See Professor Devers if you have questions about your eligibility to enroll in this course.

Course description:
This course is designed to introduce students to the genre of graphic novels. Required readings represent both Eastern and Western comics traditions, and range in publication dates from around 1930 through the 21st century. Looking at these primary texts alongside an important critical work (*Understanding Comics*), students will learn to identify the key components of graphic narrative—including technical aspects of visual storytelling as well as more traditional elements of prose narrative—and how they work together to form a graphic narrative. Students will also be asked to identify the major themes addressed by the genre over time, and to evaluate the ways in which those themes, and the ways they are addressed, have changed.

Course objectives:
Students who successfully complete the course requirements will be able to:
--define and identify technical components of graphic narrative, including panels, dialogue, narration, white space (or
        gutter), characterization methods, and the relationship between word and image.
--identify the main types of graphic narrative since the early twentieth century, including comic strips, comic books,
        graphic novels, animation.
--identify the primary topics portrayed in graphic novels, including superheroes, antiheroes, (auto)biography, social
        commentary, fantasy, and history.
--discuss the differences and similarities among graphic novel traditions in various cultures (e.g., USA, England, Holland,
        Japan)

Required texts (to purchase):
Barefoot Gen, Book 1, by Keiji Nakazawa
Batman: The Dark Knight Returns, by Frank Miller
The Complete Persepolis, by Marjane Satrapi
Contract with God, by Will Eisner
Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic, by Alison Bechdel
Maus, by Art Spiegelman
Understanding Comics, by Scott McCloud
Sandman Volume 1: Preludes and Nocturns, by Neil Gaiman
Watchmen, by Dave Gibbons and Alan Moore

Required texts (handouts):
Excerpts from *American Splendor*, by Harvey Pekar
Excerpts from *He Done Her Wrong*, by Milt Gross
Excerpts from *The Adventures of Tintin: The Calculus Affair*, by Hergé

Recommended: A writing manual like one used in ENG 1101 or ENG 1121; access to the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/ will meet this requirement.

A note about readings: You are expected to have access to assigned readings at each class meeting. If you choose to use an eReader, you need to bring it to class every day; however, please note that no electronic devices, ***including eReaders***, are allowed during exams.

Required assignments and grading:
30%: 3 short papers (10% each)
5%: A research project that produces a bibliographic information sheet and an oral presentation
20%: A midterm exam
20%: A final exam
10%: Classroom Participation, including informal writing assignments
15%: Unannounced quizzes (quizzes cannot be made up; lowest quiz grade will be dropped)

Other requirements of the course
In addition to the materials listed above, this course requires a number of other commitments from you, namely,

> Regular attendance: This course is designed as a seminar-type class, which means that active participation is necessary if you and your peers are to succeed in this class. I expect you to come to class prepared (which means you've read the assigned readings and you've completed any homework assignments). I also expect you to come to class on time and stay for the duration of our meeting. Arriving more than 10 minutes late, or leaving more than 10 minutes early will result in a "late" mark on your attendance record. At your fourth "late," you will lose five (5) points off your semester class participation grade; an additional five (5) points will be lost with every additional "late" mark. Distracted and distracting behavior, which includes using cell phones or music devices, will also result in a reduced classroom participation grade, since it demonstrates to me that you are not, in fact, actually present and engaged *mentally* in our classroom. You are allowed 3 absences from this class without penalty. The third absence may result in a WU grade. If you do miss a class, please know that you are responsible for making up any missed work, and for the information we covered while you were gone. If your religion is not directly recognized by the school calendar, and you anticipate missing classes for religious reasons, please see me as soon as possible. **Other than absences due to religious observances, absences will only be excused in the event of unforeseeable emergencies affecting you or your immediate family; documentation is required.**

> Responsible scholarship: I expect you to complete all assignments on time, and to do so honestly. We will discuss academic integrity and plagiarism early in the semester. Know now, however, that I will not tolerate any academic dishonesty in my course. The school's statement on academic integrity is below; if you have any questions about plagiarism and how to avoid it, please ask me.

New York City College of Technology Policy on Academic Integrity
Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

> Another aspect of responsible scholarship is doing your best to meet course requirements. If you find you are having trouble keeping up with your assignments, please see me during office hours so we can arrange a make-up schedule. Formal papers are due at the start of class on the days indicated on the course calendar, and must adhere to MLA guidelines. **Late papers will be accepted within 24 hours of the original due date with a 10 point penalty; after this grace period, no late papers will be accepted.**

> Papers and blog posts: This course is designated as writing intensive. We will use writing to help us learn about literary texts, even as we use literature to teach us about our own writing. You are expected to demonstrate improvement in your writing as the semester progresses and as you incorporate feedback from the professor. In addition to the formal paper assignments, you'll write responses to the readings on our class blog on City Tech's Open Lab. You will generate at least one original post in response to a

course theme, and at least 4 comments in response to other students' posts and/or comments. This will enable us to sustain our conversation outside the classroom. Your grades for these posts and comments contribute to your Participation grade. Please use your City Tech email address and sign up for the open lab at http://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu. Then visit our class web site at http://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/devers3402graphicnovel/ and request membership ("Join Now!"). You can also access the syllabus, assignments, and other information there, so check it often.

Students with disabilities
If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please see me as soon as possible so I can accommodate you. If you think you may have a disability that requires accommodation, see the Student Support Services Program in Room A237, or call them at 718-260-5143.

Course schedule (subject to revision)

Class #	Date	Reading to be completed before class	Written work due today	Classroom activity
1	27-Aug	In class reading: syllabus		Course introduction
2	29-Aug	Scott McCloud, Chapter 1, "Setting the Record Straight" and Chapter 2, "The Vocabulary of Comics"		Introduction to graphic novels
3	5-Sept	*He Done Her Wrong* and *Adventures of Tintin*, handout distributed in class	Email to Prof. Devers	Discuss history and styles of graphic novels; Assign paper 1
4	10-Sept	Will Eisner, *Contract with God*		Discuss Eisner
5	12-Sept	Neil Gaiman, *Sandman Volume 1: Preludes and Nocturns*		Discuss Gaiman; Plagiarism quiz
6	19-Sept	McCloud Chapter 3, "Blood in the Gutter"		Continue discussing Gaiman; begin drawing connections. Research project assigned today.
7	24-Sept			Finish discussing *Sandman*
8	1-Oct	Frank Miller, *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*		Theme study: Superheroes
9	3-Oct		Paper 1	Finish discussing *Batman*
10	10-Oct	Excerpts from *American Splendor* (class handout); McCloud Chapter 4, "Time Frames"		Assign paper 2; discuss Pekar
11	15-Oct	Dave Gibbons and Alan Moore, *Watchmen* Chapters 1-2		Begin discussing *Watchmen*
12	17-Oct	*Watchmen* Chapters 3-4		Continue discussing *Watchmen*,
13	22-Oct	*Watchmen* Chapters 5-6	Open Lab Posts/Comments (#1) due	Continue discussing *Watchmen*, with attention to the inter-chapter texts
14	24-Oct	*Watchmen* Chapters 7-9; McCloud Chapter 5, "Living in Line"		Theme study: Violence
15	29-Oct	*Watchmen* Chapters 10-12		Finish discussing *Watchmen*
16	31-Oct			Midterm Exam

Class #	Date	Reading to be completed before class	Written work due today	Classroom activity
17	5-Nov	Art Spiegelman, *Maus I*, McCloud Chapter 6, "Show and Tell"	Paper 2	Introduce *Maus*
18	7-Nov			Assign paper 3; Continue discussing *Maus I*
19	12-Nov	*Maus II*, McCloud Chapter 7, "The Six Steps"		Discuss *Maus*
20	14-Nov		Open Lab Posts/Comments (#2) due	Continue discussing *Maus II*
21	19-Nov	Keiji Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen* through page 99		Theme study: History; discuss Gen
22	21-Nov	Finish *Barefoot Gen*		Finish discussing Gen
23	26-Nov	Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*, McCloud Chapter 8, "A Word About Color"		Discuss Bechdel and autobiography
24	28-Nov	Finish *Fun Home*		Finish Bechdel discussion
25	3-Dec	Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis I*	Paper 3	Discuss Satrapi
26	5-Dec	Finish *Persepolis I*		Continue discussing Satrapi
27	10-Dec	*Persepolis II*	Open Lab Posts/Comments (#3) due	Finish discussion of Satrapi
28	12-Dec		Bibliographic sheets due	Individual presentations
29	17-Dec	McCloud Chapter 9, "Putting it All Together"		Individual presentations and exam review
30	19-Dec			Final Exam