

CUYAMACA COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

HISTORY 157 – HISTORY THROUGH COMICS

3 hours lecture, 3 units

Catalog Description

This course studies history through sequential art and images, comics, and graphic novels, looking at Paleolithic cave paintings, Roman graffiti, Persian bas-reliefs, Mexican murals, and more, with a focus on 20th and 21st-century comics and graphic novels. Topics explored through comics may include: social justice, identity, love, war, discrimination, genocide, hope, resistance, environmental justice, and more. Students will use sequential art and comics as primary and secondary sources, learning how sequential art and comics reflect the concerns and realities of particular times, places, and people.

Prerequisite

None

Course Content

- 1) Interacting with and interpreting sequential art, comics, and graphic novels
 - a. Reading, writing about, and discussing comics
 1. Analyzing visual images
 2. Visual ethnography
 3. Textual analysis
 4. Semiotics
 5. Sequential art and comic book design basics
 6. Reading and interpreting sequential art, comics, and graphic novels as historical (primary and secondary) sources
- 2) Global History of Sequential Art
 Potential topics include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Cave, rock art, and petroglyphs (Algeria, France, San Diego, etc.)
 - b. Religious and political art of the ancient world (i.e. Standard of Ur, etc.)
 - c. Egyptian hieroglyphs
 - d. Persian bas-reliefs
 - e. Greek statues and vases
 - f. Roman graffiti
 - g. Medieval illuminated manuscript
 - h. Mosques and Cathedrals (i.e. Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba, Basilica of Saint-Denis, etc.)
 - i. Viking saga wood panels (i.e. Saga of Sigurd panels, Hylestad Stave Church in Norway)
 - j. Bayeux tapestry
 - k. Indian manjusha art
 - l. Mayan stelae and hieroglyphs
 - m. Teotihuacan murals
 - n. Benin bronzes and brass plaques
 - o. Chinese lianhuanhua
 - p. 20th-century Mexican murals (i.e. Diego Rivera's "The History of Mexico")
- 3) History of comics and graphic novels in the United States
 - a. "Funny Pages" and the Golden Age (1938-1956)
 - b. Silver Ages (1956-1970)

- c. Bronze Age (1970-1985)
 - d. Modern Age (1986-present)
- 4) Historical events, themes, and topics in comics and graphic novels
Potential topics include, but are not limited to:
- a. Sovereignty and self-determination
 - b. Love
 - c. War
 - d. Discrimination
 - e. Genocide
 - f. Hope
 - g. Joy
 - h. Justice impacted
 - i. Abolition movements
 - j. Cold War
 - k. Atomic energy
 - l. Colonization and decolonization
 - m. Environmental justice
 - n. Civil Rights Movements
 - o. Internment and concentration camps
 - p. Language
 - q. Nationalism
 - r. Immigration status
 - s. Religion
 - t. White supremacy
 - u. Settler colonialism
 - v. Liberation
- 5) Social justice and identity
- a. Resistance, activism, and agency
 - b. Race and ethnicity
 - 1. African American representations
 - 2. Asian American representations
 - 3. Chicano/a/x and Latino/a/x representations
 - 4. Native American representations
 - c. Gender and sex
 - d. LGBTQ+
 - e. Ability status

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) Apply technical vocabulary for engaging and analyzing the formal features of comics relating to historical events.
- 2) Evaluate how comics express the values of their creator and the time and place in which they were created.
- 3) Evaluate how comics challenge and resist imposed norms and dominant narratives.
- 4) Compare and contrast forms of sequential art across time and cultures.
- 5) Demonstrate an understanding of historical events through comics.
- 6) Demonstrate an understanding of social justice efforts through comics.
- 7) Demonstrate an understanding of how comics can be used to understand issues of marginalization and resistance related to identity, including racism, ethnocentrism, gender, LGBTQ+, ability, religion, etc.

- 8) Describe how women and various ethnic, racial, and socio-economic groups, have influenced comics and graphic novels.
- 9) Analyze the relevancy of history as expressed through sequential art.
- 10) Analyze and interpret comics as both primary and secondary sources as part of achieving objectives 1-9.

Method of Evaluation

A grading system will be established by the instructor and implemented uniformly. Grades will be based on demonstrated proficiency in subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation, including quizzes and exams, writing assignments, in-class activities, and research projects that measure students' ability to do the following:

- 1) Analyze and articulate comics and the construction, construction, and socio-cultural issues related to race and ethnicity, racialization, equity, ethnocentrism, eurocentrism, white supremacy, settler colonialism, self-determination, liberation, decolonization, and anti-racism.
- 2) Apply theory to describe critical events in history, culture, and intellectual traditions, emphasizing agency and self-determination.
- 3) Critically discuss the intersection of race and ethnicity in comics with other categories affected by hierarchy and oppression, such as class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability, and/or age.
- 4) Describe how resistance, social justice, and liberation are portrayed and experienced in comics.
- 5) Compare and contrast, analyze, and discuss comics and social justice.
- 6) Analyze current issues through comics.
- 7) Identify and apply primary and secondary source evidence (sequential art) to interpretations of history.

Special Materials Required of Student

None

Minimum Instructional Facilities

- 1) Smart classroom with writing boards, overhead projector
- 2) Library with adequate collections in world history and modern American history

Method of Instruction

- 1) Lecture and discussion
- 2) Small and large group discussion
- 3) Multimedia presentations
- 4) Individual and group projects, structured in-class exercises
- 5) Primary and secondary source analysis
- 6) Library materials and Internet exploration
- 7) Auxiliary use of study groups, peer tutoring and/or instructional office hours

Out-of-Class Assignments

- 1) Reading assignments, reading response questions, reading journals
- 2) Metacognitive reflections
- 3) Primary and secondary source analysis
- 4) Projects
- 5) Create sequential art that focuses on a historical or current event or theme
- 6) Field exercises including museum and library research and visits to museums and historic sites

Texts and References

- 1) Required (representative examples):
 - a. McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. William Morrow Paperbacks, 2001. (Most current edition)

- b. Kendi, Ibram X. *Stamped from the Beginning: A Graphic History of Racist Ideas in America*. Ten Speed Graphic, 2023.
 - c. Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens: A Graphic History: The Birth of Humankind, Vol. 1*. Harper Perennial, 2020.
 - d. Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens: A Graphic History: The Pillars of Civilization, Vol. 2*. Harper Perennial, 2021.
- 2) Supplemental:
- a. Walker, David. *The Black Panther Party: A Graphic Novel History*. Ten Speed Graphic, 2021.
 - b. Oseman, Alice. *Heartstopper*. Graphix, 2020
 - c. Kendall, Mikki. *Amazons, Abolitionists, and Activists: A Graphic History of Women's Fight for Their Rights*. Ten Speed Graphic, 2019
 - d. Takei, George. *They Called Us Enemy*. Top Shelf, 2019.
 - e. Lewis, John. *March*, Trilogy edition. Top Shelf Productions, 2016.
 - f. Satrapi, Marjane. *The Complete Persepolis: Volumes 1 and 2*. Pantheon, 2007
 - g. Spiegelman, Art. *The Complete Maus*. Pantheon, 1996.

Student Learning Outcomes

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

- 1) Analyze, evaluate, and interpret primary and secondary sources.
- 2) Analyze and apply historical patterns and current events to students' own lives and experiences.
- 3) Analyze how power operates in society, through the categories of race, class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality.
- 4) Develop and support an argument or thesis statement with historical evidence.