Picture This, Read That:  

Text-Image Relations in Children’s Picture Books, Superhero Comics, and Graphic Novels.

3:00 PM 03:50 PM M W F Academic Village B-Honors;

Instructor: Dr. Aparna Gollapudi

Office: Eddy 321; Office Hrs. TR 2-3.30 pm or by appointment

Phone: 491-5266; Email: aparna.gollapudi@colostate.edu

Course Description: Disillusioned superheroes, Wild Things, and Jewish mice fleeing from Nazi cats – these are some of the characters you will encounter in this course on image-text interactions in (1) children’s picture books (2) comics, and (3) graphic novels. Using works from these three genres, the course will explore the nature of words and images, how they create meaning separately, and how they interact in complex ways to tell a story.

Do images have a ‘language’ and can the text sometimes function as an image? Do words often seem to colonize and dominate images? And can images function as a subversive element in the book, telling a very different story than the ones told by the words? How do we “read” not just the black marks inside the book but the book itself as a visible, material, object? These are some of the questions we will ask in this course as we consider the aesthetic, socio-historical, and thematic aspects of works such as children’s picture books, superhero comics, and graphic novels. To aid in our exploration of these imagetexts – works that use pictures as well as words to tell a story – we will use recent scholarly theories about visuality and textuality, breaking down the divisions between “highbrow” and “low” or “popular” literature. So if you like the idea of writing a formal, academic paper on a childhood favourite such as Wild Things, or a superhero classic like Watchmen, this is the course for you!

• Course Learning Objectives:

After completing this course, a successful student will be able to:

o Develop the critical thinking skills for (1) reading, analyzing, and interpreting readings and (2) articulating and defending one’s positions in writing, in-class discussions, and oral presentations.

o Participate in class discussions while respecting the views of others.

o Relate the seminar topic to the AUCC categories in Arts/Humanities, Social/Behavioral Sciences, Historical Perspectives, and Global & Cultural Awareness.

o Have a greater appreciation of diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness in the seminar topic.

o Discuss aesthetic, socio-historical, and philosophical aspects of text-image relations in picture books, comics, and graphic novels.
Analyze generic traditions and expectations of text-image relations in these three genres
Apply theories of word-image interactions in analysis of creative works.
Use close reading skills by attending to formal textual and visual elements, both in class discussions

Expectation for work outside of class time: You will be expected to be able to spend a MINIMUM of six hours outside of class time per week for this course.

*IMPORTANT NOTE

Warning: We will be studying literature that contains sexually explicit language and content, including graphic bodily imagery and sexual violence. If you find literary analysis of such material morally offensive or psychologically triggering in any way, you should consider dropping the course.

Texts Required:

- WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE; Author: SENDAK; Publisher: HARPERS; ISBN: 978060254926;
- WATCHMEN; Author: MOORE; Publisher: HACHETTE B; ISBN: 9780930289232
- THE SANDMAN vol. 1: Preludes & Nocturnes; Author: GAIMAN; Publisher: VERTIGO; ISBN: 9780374375522
- FUN HOME: FAMILY TRAGICOMIC; Author: BECHDEL; Publisher: CENGAGE L; ISBN: 9780618871711
- MAUS Vol. I; Author: SPIEGELMAN; Publisher: PANTHEON; ISBN: 978-0394747231
- THE ARRIVAL; Author: TAN; Publisher: Arthur A Levine, ISBN: 978-0439895293
- ADDITIONAL CRITICAL ESSAYS (will be made available online or as handouts)

Assignments:

The due dates of all assignments are part of the course PLAN and as such, are subject to change depending on the realities on the ground. Please check canvas frequently for any due date changes.

- Writing Assignments: All papers for this course will be double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 font, MLA formatting.
  - 2-page [500 words min.] visual analysis essay on an image of your choice (5%)
  - 4-page [1000 words min.] argument-driven analytical essay close-interpretation paper on picture books (15%)
  - 5-page [1250 words min.] argument-driven analytical essay on comics (20%)
Artistry Project - create a text-image narrative with a critical analysis component (3-4 pages of art with text + 1-2 pages of critical reflection, analyzing your own work in terms of the experience as well as the content knowledge of course you used for the piece).

These assignments address the University Honors Program competencies of critical thinking; creativity and problem solving; and interdisciplinary learning integrated with global &/or cultural viewpoints.

Analytical Research Paper

- 9-10 page [2250-2500 words] argument-driven research essay on any text you have not written on yet (25%)

This assignment addresses the University Honors Program competencies of critical thinking and interdisciplinary learning integrated with global &/or cultural viewpoints.

Group Presentation (worth: 7%) You will work with your group to introduce and discuss topics from one particular text on the syllabus.

This assignment addresses the University Honors Program competencies of critical thinking; creativity and problem solving; and professionalism, interpersonal skills, & emotional intelligence.

Oral Presentations

- Mini Speech – 4 minutes extemporaneous speech on assigned themes from literary works on the syllabus: 8%

- Individual Speech Presentation (worth: 15%) Students give an extemporaneous persuasive speech 7-8 minutes in length. The purpose of the speech is to persuade, not inform. Speeches must flow logically and be evidence-driven. A full sentence outline with complete bibliography is required.
This assignment addresses the University Honors Program competencies of critical thinking; interdisciplinary learning integrated with global &/or cultural viewpoints; and professionalism, interpersonal skills, & emotional intelligence.

**Class Participation (10%).** Participation is a component of your course grade. Though we all participate in different ways, here are some general guidelines:

- **A:** active, consistent, quality contributions. Excellent preparation for class shows that assignments were read fully, carefully, and critically and that the student has come to class prepared to comment, discuss, make claims and think out loud about a text’s meanings. These students will also carefully listen and react to their peers’ comments in class. They may connect the text to previous course discussions. In short, they show that they are conscientious, inquiring minds, and will get an A for their efforts. They will also make the course better for all of us.

- **B:** these students come to every class, are almost always prepared, and regularly respond in class in a way that shows that they have done the reading. What makes a “B” instead of an “A” in participation is the quality of the preparation that has gone on before the student gets to class. You will not get a “B” in participation, however, by just showing up and talking every now and then. You must demonstrate a command of the reading and initiate discussion.

- **C:** these students come to class and have usually done the reading, but do not demonstrate through participation that they are engaged with the material. Infrequent contributions to class discussion.

- **D:** Physically present but not much more. Rarely contributed to discussions.

- **F:** Not coming to class.

The class participation grade is divided thus: every 4 weeks or so you will get a grade for your participation in that period. So, over the semester, you will have 3 participation grades, each worth 2% ( 2% x 3=6%). Of the remaining 4%, your participation in group work, the peer review process and contribution to the intellectual/social climate of the class, over the semester is worth 3%. Completing PICC evaluation is worth 1%.

Attendance is mandatory. Any absences must have prior approval by the instructor; unexcused absences receive 0 points for that time period. Participation is graded according to the criteria given below over three evaluations of approximately 4-week intervals.

Honors competencies self-assessment. Honors seminars are intended to assist student competencies in critical thinking; creativity and problem solving; interdisciplinary learning integrated with global &/or cultural viewpoints and
professionalism, interpersonal skills, & emotional intelligence. The assignment is due at the end of Week 4. Students must include comments for all four categories for full credit.

*This assignment addresses the University Honors Program competencies of critical thinking and professionalism, interpersonal skills, & emotional intelligence.*

**EVALUATION SYSTEM**

The assignments that are used to evaluate student learning are:

12. Writing Assignments including Final Research Analysis paper: 60% (1-2 page visual analysis essay 5%, 4 page essay 12%, 5 page essay or Artistry Project 18%, Research Analysis essay 25%)
13. Oral Presentations – 22% (Final persuasive speech 15%, Mini Speech 7%)
14. Group Presentation – 8%
15. Participation (10% of grade). This includes the PICC self-assessment.

**GRADING**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group assignment</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essays (3) and Final Research Paper</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speeches (2)</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Grade distribution (plus/minus grades may be used):
Incomplete

The grade of “I” is a temporary grade awarded to indicate that for reasons beyond the student’s control or that the student could not have reasonably have anticipated, he/she could not complete the requirements for the course. When an instructor assigns an “I,” he/she shall specify in writing the requirements the student shall fulfill to complete the course. After one year, or at the end of the semester in which the student graduates (whichever comes first), an “incomplete” grade will automatically changed to an “F” grade unless the course has been completed and the grade change submitted. The student must be in good academic standing in the class in order to receive an incomplete. (CSU Faculty Council policy)

Late Assignments Policy

All assignments are due in class on the date due. Late assignments are not accepted unless there are genuine extenuating circumstances or other situations. I am open to conversations about unexpected circumstances. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Resources

The CSU Writing Center is an excellent resource to support the development of your writing skills throughout your college career. While students are not required to access services, you are strongly encouraged to seek consultation on your writing projects required for this course. In addition to contact information, there are useful resources available on their website: http://writing.colostate.edu/ (Links to an external site.)

The Morgan Library reference librarians can direct you to books and articles for the research paper and the oral presentation. I recommend contacting Rob Sica, Social Sciences and Humanities Liaison, Morgan Library 154, rob.sica@colostate.edu, 970.491.1047.
Absence Policy

Attendance is mandatory. If you are ill or unable to attend class, you must contact the instructor in advance. It is your responsibility to contact a classmate to get information discussed in class. It is good practice to always have the phone number and email address of at least two students in your class. You can request this information from classmates and write it below.

Accommodations for disabilities

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires Colorado State University to provide academic adjustments or accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students seeking academic adjustment or accommodations must self-identify with the Office of Resources for Disabled Students (ORDS). You may call for an appointment at: 491-6385 or stop in at 100 General Services Building. After meeting with ORDS staff, and based on their recommendations, students are encouraged to meet with their instructors to discuss their needs, and if applicable, any lab safety concerns related to their disabilities.

Academic and Professional Honesty Policy

This course adheres to the Academic Integrity Policy of the Colorado State University General Catalog (Page 7) and the Student Conduct Code. Honors students enrolled in this course are held to high standards of integrity. Academic integrity is expected within all assignments for this course. Students will be required to make an honor pledge to complete this course. The honors pledge will be completed as a class. For more information about academic integrity, please visit: http://learning.colostate.edu/integrity/.

It is expected that students will use their own knowledge and skill for assignments unless directed to do otherwise. Incidents of cheating, plagiarism or knowingly providing false or incorrect information are considered serious and will be treated seriously. Consequences of these incidents are at the discretion of the faculty member involved and may consist of confiscation of assignments, an F grade, or reporting to the CSU Student Conduct office. It is expected that students will demonstrate concern for others, respect the confidentiality of information about, the property of and the decisions made by others.

Reporting student disclosures of interpersonal violence

CSU’s Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking, and Retaliation policy designates
faculty and employees of the University as “Responsible Employees” (https://oeo.colostate.edu/title-ix-sexual-assault-sexual-violence-sexual-harassment/ (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.). This designation is consistent with federal law and guidance, and requires faculty to report information regarding students who may have experienced any form of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking or retaliation. This includes information shared with faculty in person, electronic communications or in class assignments. As “Responsible Employees,” faculty may refer students to campus resources (see below), together with informing the Office of Support and Safety Assessment to help ensure student safety and welfare. Information regarding sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking and retaliation is treated with the greatest degree of confidentiality possible while also ensuring student and campus safety.

- Any student who may be the victim of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking or retaliation is encouraged to report to CSU through one or more of the following resources:
  - Emergency Response 911
  - Deputy Title IX Coordinator/Office of Support and Safety Assessment (970) 491-1350
  - Colorado State University Police Department (non-emergency) (970) 491-6425

**Canvas platform**

Class materials, homework assignments, discussion assignments, oral presentation, research paper, grades, and other information critical to your success in this course are located on Canvas. You can access the Canvas site for this course by logging in at http://info.canvas.colostate.edu/login.aspx (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

**Final Note:** It is my genuine wish that all of you excel and grow intellectually through your participation in this course. I am a reasonable teacher. If you are having trouble performing in the class and on your assignments please come talk to me or email me as you are having the problem. Just as I expect you to be responsible for your success in this class, you should expect that I will be responsive to your questions and concerns. I look forward to an enjoyable and productive semester.