“Graphic Narratives in a Global Frame” will help develop the core skills of critical analysis, intellectual discussion and debate, and expository writing through the study of American, Canadian, Iranian, Australian, Danish, and Japanese comics and animation. While so-called “graphic novels” have begun to assume the status of literature and fine art only recently in America, other audiences from around the world have long appreciated the high-art potential of the comics medium. We’ll look carefully at this intersection of popular culture and high art and talk about the ways in which the cultural locations of the artists we study might shift our understanding of high and low culture in these graphic narratives. Intensive, weekly reading and writing assignments will structure our study of graphic narratives, animated film, and other comparable media, and we will also try our hand at crafting our own web comics throughout the semester and blogging about comics in contemporary culture. What we will learn is that rather than being characterized by intuitive and uncritical apperception, graphic narratives rely upon a complex and culturally specific set of rules and codes that demand intellectual acuity and global sensibilities. Pursuing these ends will allow us to transfer these analytical skills to other forms of popular culture, bridging formal intellectual analysis with the wider world around us. My hope after this class is that you can begin to see everything from Shakespeare to Super Bowl ads as the occasion to think critically about cultural narratives.

To this end, our seminar is also part of the “Popular Literary Cultures and Cultural Literacies” first-year learning community in Davidson-Wilson Hall. Our seminar comprises one third of this learning community, along with Professor Winston’s “Reading Fiction/Reading Culture” seminar and Professor McGaughey’s “Pop Goes the Canon” seminar, which share both broad and specific themes related to popular literature and culture. The learning community will create interesting opportunities for the three seminars to interact, sometimes formally and more often informally, and to experience special gatherings on- and off-campus throughout the semester. Most importantly, the residential learning community creates the opportunity for you to continue your seminar conversations in Davidson-Wilson. Together with my faculty colleagues teaching the other seminars, I have designed these linked programs to deepen your engagement by taking your first-year seminar experience out of the classroom and tapping into the broader resources of the College and the
community beyond. Learning community events are integrated into the syllabus, and I expect that you will participate fully in them.

This learning community is supported by two upperclass students who will serve as mentors and resources for your transition to the expectations of College life both in and outside the classroom. Our Learning Community Coordinator (LCC) is Alison Springle, a senior English major from Pennsylvania. The LCC has several roles. She helps the LC faculty by handling the many logistical details of LC events, such as film screenings and dinner discussions. While Alison is not enrolled in our seminar, she has read some of the key texts in our syllabus, and like you she is my advisee and has taken classwork with me. Her familiarity with my expectations for my students makes her a great person to speak to about the ideas, issues and assignments you are encountering, be they more formal questions about the class or conversations that spill over into a lunch- or dinnertime conversation after a contentious seminar debate. Most importantly, your LCC will be looking for ways to encourage deeper engagement with the themes of our Learning Community. I encourage you to get to know Alison and be open to the LC opportunities that arise during your residential experience.

We also have a Writing Associate (WA) assigned to our seminar, Audrey Schaefer, a senior English major from Ohio. Audrey’s role throughout the semester will be as a dedicated writing tutor, facilitating small-group writing workshops, holding office hours, and helping to present in-class discussions about important skills like developing, drafting, and revising college-level writing assignments. Audrey is also an advisee and former student as well as a trained tutor, another wonderful mentor to reach out to when you experience challenges throughout the semester.

One class alone can’t prepare you for all of the challenges and rigors of college-level academics, and many of the goals that we establish for ourselves here will be realized throughout your four years at Dickinson. However, I hope that this seminar will provide a sturdy foundation for your intellectual and personal growth at Dickinson, and I look forward to a challenging, productive, and engaging semester together. Welcome to Dickinson and our first-year seminar!

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SCHEDULE: [M]=Readings available online through course Moodle site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 Aug</td>
<td><strong>9:00-10:30</strong></td>
<td>Introductions, syllabus, course policies and expectations <strong>Class meeting with our Learning Community Coordinator, Allison Springle</strong> <strong>One-on-one advising meetings will take place in the afternoon</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>10:00-11:30</strong></td>
<td>Chris Ware, “Thanksgiving” pp. 280-89 of Best American Comics 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**New Student Orientation Begins—Wednesday, August 25th**
**2:00-3:30** Introduction to the expectations of college-level writing
**Class meeting with our Writing Associate, Audrey Schaefer**
**Convocation, 4:00 Sunday August 29th**

30 Aug
Scott McCloud, Understanding Comics

➔ Paper #1 due, September 2nd, 5:00 PM

**Week 2: How to Read a Comic**

2 Sept **Academic Integrity Session with our Library Liaison, Chris Bombaro**
6:00 PM Information Commons Classroom (ICC) Lower Level, Library

3 Sept Instructional class on the use of Comic Life program and blogging; McCloud (cont.)
**Class meeting with our Technical Liaison, Brenda Landis, in Bosler Hall**

➔ Last Day to Add/Drop or Change to/from Pass/Fail—Friday, September 3

5 Sept **Learning Community Film Screening**
“Sherlock Holmes” (Dir. Guy Richie), time and location TBD

6 Sept Learning Community discussion sections on “Sherlock Holmes,” location TBA

➔ Comics Response #1 due, September 9th, 5:00 PM

**Week 3: American Comics Now**

10 Sept Lynda Barry (ed.), The Best American Comics 2008

13 Sept Barry (cont.); Developing reading and note-taking skills

➔ Paper #2 draft due, September 16th, 5:00 PM

**Week 4: Stranger in a Strange Land**

17 Sept Guy Delisle, Burma Chronicles
Selections from Burma/Myanmar: What Everyone Needs to Know [M]

20 Sept Delisle (cont.); Moving from draft to revision
Small-group writing workshops with Professor Ball and Audrey Schaefer will be scheduled during this week

➔ Paper #2 revision due, September 23rd, 5:00 PM

**Week 5: Forms of Exile**

24 Sept Marjane Satrapi, Persepolis

➔ Last Day to Change in Level for Language Courses—Friday, September 24th

27 Sept Satrapi (cont.); Beginning to read cultural difference
Selections from Nima Naghibi and Andrew O’Malley, “Estranging the Familiar: ‘East’ and ‘West’ in Satrapi’s Persepolis” [M]

➔ Comics Response #2 due, September 30th, 5:00 PM
Week 6: Stranger in a Stranger Land
1 Oct  Shaun Tan, *The Arrival*  
Shaun Tan, “Picture Books: Who Are They For?” [M]  
Chuan-Yao Ling, “A Conversation with Illustrator Shaun Tan” [M]
3 Oct  **Learning Community Film Screening**  
“M” (Dir. Fritz Lang), time and location TBD
4 Oct  Learning Community discussion sections on “M”

Week 7: Study Skills, Library Resources
8 Oct  Tan (cont.); Developing a thesis, preparing for midterms  
11 Oct  **Library information session with Chris Bombaro**
        **One-on-one advising sessions with Professor Ball and small-group writing workshops with Audrey Schaefer will both be scheduling during this week, no class meeting on Oct. 15th**

⇒Paper #3 draft due, October 15th, 5:00 PM⇐

**Oct. 18—Fall Pause**
5 pm, Friday, October 15 thru 8 am, Wednesday, October 20

Week 8: The Cartoon Crisis
Selections from Jytte Klausen, *The Cartoons that Shook the World* [M]

**Course Request Period for Spring 2011 Semester—Monday, October 25 thru Wednesday, October 27**

25 Oct  Selections from *Transnational Media Events: The Mohammed Cartoons and the Imagined Clash of Civilizations* [M]; Reading Critically

⇒Comics Response #3 due, October 28th, 5:00 PM⇐

Week 9: Growing Strange
Small-group writing workshops with Audrey Schaefer will be scheduled during this week
29 Oct  Shinobu Price, “Cartoons from Another Planet: Japanese Animation as Cross-Cultural Communication” [M]
31 Oct  **Learning Community Film Screening (Halloween Edition)**  
“Spirited Away” (Dir. Hayao Miyazaki), time and location TBD
1 Nov  Learning Community discussion sections on “Spirited Away”  
Dani Cavallaro, selections from *Animé Art of Hayao Miyazaki* [M]

⇒Paper #3 revision due, November 1st, 5:00 PM⇐

**Last Day to Withdraw from a Course with a "W" grade—Wed., November 3**
**Week 10: Growing Up, Growing Apart**

5 Nov  
Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*

8 Nov  
Bechdel (cont.); Developing your own viewpoint
Ann Cvetkovich, “Drawing the Archive in Alison Bechdel’s “Fun Home” [M]

**Weeks 11 & 12: New Departures**

12 Nov  
**Research skills session with Chris Bombaro**

15 Nov  
Taiyo Matsumoto, *Gogo Monster*

Small-group writing workshops with Audrey Schaefer will be scheduled during this week, no class meeting on Nov. 22nd

19 Nov  
Matsumoto (cont.); Pulling it all together

➔**Paper #4 draft due, November 23rd, 5:00 PM**➔

➔**Thanksgiving Break—26 Nov**➔

**Week 13: Conclusions**

29 Nov  
In-class presentations

➔**Paper #4 revision due, December 2nd, 5:00 PM**➔

3 Dec  
In-class presentations, evaluations, celebrations

**REQUIREMENTS:**
—TIMELY AND THOUGHTFUL COMPLETION OF READING ASSIGNMENTS
—PUNCTUAL ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGED PARTICIPATION, INCLUDING LEARNING COMMUNITY, ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, AND LIBRARY SKILLS MEETINGS
—FOUR PAPERS (DUE SEPT. 2, SEPT. 16/23, OCT 15/NOV 1, and NOV 23/DEC 2)
—REGULAR BLOG POSTINGS, INCLUDING A PORTFOLIO OF THREE SELF-CREATED COMICS (DUE SEPT. 9, SEPT. 30, and OCT. 28)

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** All available for purchase in the College Bookstore (if you purchase your books through other sources, please only buy the same editions)

The costs of publication and distribution, as well as the strong market of comics enthusiasts and collectors, contribute to the high cost of graphic novels. All course texts are on reserve in Waidner-Spahr Library. Please contact me if the cost of textbooks for this course is in any way prohibitive.

**Grading:** Written Assignments—70% (#1—5%, #2—10%, #3—20%, #4—35%), Class Participation—15%, Blog Posts/Comics Portfolio—15%

DRAFTS WILL COUNT AS 40% OF YOUR FINAL GRADE ON INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS

**Late Paper Policy:** All papers and other assignments are due on the date indicated on the syllabus. With the extraordinary and rare exception for medical or emergency reasons, late papers will receive a failing grade. Failure to turn in all writing assignments into the Moodle dropbox by December 2nd will result in a failing grade for the course. Exceptions will not be made.

**Course Attendance Policy:** More than two unexcused absences, including small-group writing workshops and library sessions, will result in a failing course participation grade. More than four unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course. Excused absences for illness need to be accompanied by a receipt from Health Services or a message from your Class Dean, Shalom Staub (stausb@dickinson.edu). Excused absences for non-academic reasons (job interviews, significant extracurricular commitments, etc.) must be arranged with me well in advance of the scheduled date. Attendance is measured not only by your physical presence, but by active contributions to course discussion and small group writing workshops. Consistent, silent attendance will receive a “C.”

**Writing Resources:** I strongly encourage students to take advantage of writing assistance that is available on campus. Our course Writing Associate Audrey Schaefer, who will be organizing small-group writing workshops throughout the semester, can also meet individually with you or help you schedule an appointment in the Writing Center. You are encouraged to visit the Writing Center at any stage of the writing process, from formulating a thesis to polishing a final draft. In all likelihood you will not be able to make last-minute appointments (especially close to the end of the semester); plan ahead to take full advantage of these resources.

**Academic Integrity:** taken from “The Dickinson College Plagiarism Policy”:
“To plagiarize is to use without proper citation or acknowledgment the words, ideas or original research of another. [. . .] When one borrows facts which are not matters of general knowledge—including all statistics—one must indicate one’s indebtedness in the text or footnote. When one borrows an idea or the logic of an agreement, one must acknowledge indebtedness either in a footnote or in the text. When in doubt—footnote [. . .] if you have questions, consult with your instructor.”

Please bear in mind the plagiarism policy, which will be discussed as a group during the beginning of the semester.
ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES: In full support of Dickinson College policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be recommended for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester (except for unusual circumstances) so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Students are required to register with Academic Resource Services in the Advising Office located on the first floor of Biddle House (contact Marni Jones, ext. 1136 or jonesmar@dickinson.edu) to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

OVERVIEW OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

ASSIGNMENT #1: This first writing assignment asks you to write a review of Chris Ware’s comics, incorporating both personal opinions and substantiated claims from a careful analysis of his work. (1-2 pages, due Sept. 2nd)

ASSIGNMENT #2: The second writing assignment asks you to define three terms for the critical analysis of comics and illustrate them through a close reading of the comics collected in Best American Comics 2008. (2-3 pages, due Sept. 16th/23rd)

ASSIGNMENT #3: The third assignment is a thesis-driven close reading of any of the comics we have read from weeks 1-7. You will have the option either to answer one of a series of questions I will provide or to pursue a thesis of your own making. (3-4 pages, due Oct. 15th/Nov. 1st)

ASSIGNMENT #4: The final assignment asks you to write a thesis-driven research paper on a topic and comic of your choosing from any week in the syllabus. A three-work bibliography will support your claims, which will have to represent both original research and incorporate the ideas of others. (6-8 pages, due Nov. 23rd/Dec. 2nd)

HAVING READ THE SYLLABUS COMPLETELY, PLEASE FILL OUT THE PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM AVAILABLE AT THE TOP OF THE MOODLE WEBSITE AND EMAIL IT TO ME DIRECTLY AT BALLD@DICKINSON.EDU. THANK YOU AND WELCOME TO THE CLASS!