

RHMS 100: Introduction to Rhetoric and Media Studies | Spring 2019

Meeting times: TTH 9:40-11:10am

Location: Olin 204

Melanie Kohnen

Office: JRHH 368

Office Hours: TTH 12:30-1:30pm, and by appointment.

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Course Overview:

Contemporary society is inextricably linked to modes and technologies of viewing. We live in a visual culture. Messages bombard us from all angles at all times of day and night and often permeate our dreams. The forms and functions of those messages are the subject of our inquiry in this course. We examine the entertainment industry that creates the media we consume, the form and content of media, and the audience's interaction with and response to media.

As we explore the foundations of Media Studies, we focus on the medium of comics. Comics and graphic novels shape contemporary entertainment in significant ways. We will read mainstream and independent comics, and explore how comics have been adapted for film and television. Through our spotlight on comics, we will begin to explore and illuminate the persuasive and aesthetic strategies of contemporary media in order to complicate, critique, and analyze them.

Required Texts:

Kelly Sue DeConnick and David Lopez. *Captain Marvel Vol. 1: Higher, Further, Faster, More*.
Tillie Walden, *Spinning*. First Second Books.

Both Kelly Sue DeConnick and Tillie Walden will visit our class after spring break.

Week 1

01/22 Introduction and Overview

01/24

- Ouellette, Laurie. "Introduction: Mapping Media Studies." In: *The Media Studies Reader*. NY: Routledge, 2013.
- Kearney, Mary Celeste. "Introduction, or How to Cook an Artichoke." In: *The Craft of Criticism*. NY: Routledge, 2018.

Week 2: Foundations: Text and Culture

01/29

- "Texts." In: *Communication, Cultural and Media Studies: The Key Concepts*. Ed. By John Hartley. Routledge, 2011.
- "Introduction." In *Practices of Looking*, p. 1-11.
- Wolk, Douglas. "What Comics Are and What They Aren't." in: *Reading Comics: How Graphic Novels Work and What They Mean*. Da Capo Press, 2007.

01/31

- Polo, Susana. [Captain Marvel, explained by the people who reimagined her](#). 2018.
- DeConnick, Kelly Sue, and David Lopez. *Captain Marvel Vol. 1: Higher, Further, Faster, More*. Marvel Comics, 2015.

Week 3: Foundations: Production/Industry

02/05

- Havens, Timothy and Amanda Lotz. Ch. 1. In: *Understanding Media Industries*, 2nd ed. Oxford University Press, 2017: 1-23.
- Tracking Captain Marvel Promotion

02/07

- Skype call with Alisa Perren, Associate Professor of Radio, Television, and Film at UT Austin.

Week 4 Foundations: Audiences

02/12

- Hills, Matt. "Audiences." In *Craft of Criticism*.
- Scott, Suzanne, and Melissa Click. "Introduction." In: *The Routledge Companion to Media Fandom*. NY: Routledge, 2018.

02/14

- Perren, Alisa and Lauren Felschow. "The Bigger Picture: Drawing Intersections between Comics, Fan, and Industry Studies." In: *The Routledge Companion to Media Fandom*. NY: Routledge, 2018.

Week 5 Captain Marvel Promotion and Fandom

02/19

- #VisibleWomen day on Feb 18
- Listen to: [Women of Marvel podcast: Captain Marvel and the Carolcorps](#)
- Edidin, Rachel. [The Minor League Superhero Who Changed the Face of Fandom](#), Wired, 2014.

02/21

- Beltran, Mary. "Representation." In [Craft of Criticism](#), p. 97-103 (you can skip the case study at the end of the chapter).
- In-class viewing: TEDx Rainier Talk by G. Willow Wilson, writer of *Ms. Marvel*

Week 6 Comics Across Media: Black Panther

02/26

- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Black Panther*. 2016.
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. [The Return of Black Panther](#). The Atlantic, April 2016.

02/28

Black Panther discussion: watch film before class (available on Netflix)

Bring screening response to class.

- Gates, Raquel, and Kristen Warner. [Wakanda Forever: The Pleasures, The Problems and The Politics](#). Film Quarterly, 2018.

Today, 7:00-8:30pm: Required attendance at Kristen Warner's talk, "Don't Just Do Representation: #AskforMore," Smith Hall (PNW Race, Rhetoric, and Media Symposium).

Week 7 Comics in Real Life: San Diego Comic-Con

03/05

- Gilbert, Anne. "Conspicuous Convention: Industry Interpellation and Fan Consumption at San Diego Comic-Con." In: *The Routledge Companion to Media Fandom*. NY: Routledge, 2018.

03/07

Midterm Review

Week 8

03/12 Midterm

03/14 – No class: SCMS / Gender Studies Symposium

Week 9: Professors on Parade: Meet RHMS Faculty

03/19

Professor Daena Goldsmith visits our class!

- Goldsmith, D. J. (forthcoming). Together, narrating an open future. In: BettyAnn Martin and Michelann Parr (Eds.), *Writing mothers: Narrative acts of care, redemption, and transformation*. Bradford, ON: Demeter Press.

03/20: Attend lecture by Ruth Carter, costume designer for Black Panther – extra credit

03/21

Professor Kundai Chirindo visits our class!

- Chirindo, Kundai. "Barack Obama, Tropology, Ideas of Africa" in *Rhetoric's Change/Rhetorics Change*, a free e-book which you can find [here](#). (link goes to a file which you can download).

Week 10: Spring Break

Week 11: Comics Research Project Overview

04/02

Comics Fair: Students choose a comic to work on for their presentations

04/04

Guest lecture by Professor Mitch Reyes

Week 12: Spotlight on Kelly Sue DeConnick

04/09

Watch before class (this functions as our reading): *She Makes Comics* (documentary, available on Netflix).

In class: Introduction to *Bitch Planet* by Kelly Sue DeConnick and Valentine DeLandro.

04/11

Class visit by Kelly Sue DeConnick

Week 13: Spotlight on Tillie Walden

04/16

Walden, Tillie. *Spinning*. First Second Books, 2018.

04/18

Class visit by Tillie Walden.

Week 14: Presentations

04/23 and 04/25: Students present their comics research in class.

Week 15: Presentations

04/30 and 05/02: Students present their comics research in class

Final: Monday May 6, 8:30-11:30am

Assignment Overview and Schedule:

If not specified otherwise, all assignments are due at 11:55PM on the due date.

Extensions are only available in the case of dire personal circumstances, and you must contact me at least 24 hours before the deadline. If you don't contact me 24hrs before the deadline and don't submit an assignment, you will not receive any points.

Late assignments are graded down half a letter grade. I do not accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late.

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Note-Taking	Ongoing	100
Participation	Ongoing	100
Quizzes	Ongoing	200
Midterm	03/12	200
Comics Research Presentation	Weeks 14 and 15	100
Comics Research Project	Weeks 14 and 15	100
Final	05/06	200
Total		1000

What does participation mean in this class?

You are expected to keep up with the readings and come to class prepared for lecture/discussion. This means you should not only have completed the readings, but worked through it by either underlining or taking notes in advance of class.

Your participation in group work also counts toward your participation grade. Homework assignments such a responses to films and guest lectures count as well.

In general, good participation means contributing thoughtful comments and questions that refer to readings, screenings, and core concepts during our class discussion and group work. The quality of your remarks is at least as important as the quantity of your remarks.

In addition to taking part in class discussions and group work, you can also meaningfully participate in class by sending me links to interesting popular and academic articles relevant to our course and by coming to office hours to discuss assignments or to chat about topics related to our course.

Overall Evaluation Criteria:

A= Excellent

This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, and readings. Writing is clear, analytical, and organized. Arguments offer innovative insights, specific examples, and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade for participation are consistently prepared for class, synthesize course materials effectively, and

contribute insightfully.

B=Good

This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly, but leans toward broad analysis rather than innovative perspectives. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.

C=Average

This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague, tangential and/or features significant grammar and spelling mistakes. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis, and features misunderstandings of key concepts/theories. Classroom participation is inarticulate, superficial, and/or infrequent.

D= Unsatisfactory

This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material, and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared, and off-topic.

F=Failed

This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments.

Course Policies:

A Note on Laptops and Cell Phone Usage

Your cell phones needs to remain in your bag for the duration of class.

You may use a laptop for note-taking and looking up information related to our class. From time to time, we also work together in Google docs.

Absences

Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed two unexcused absences during the semester (if your unexcused absences exceed that limit, you put yourself at risk of failing the course). All other absences must be for valid, non-academic reasons, such as medical emergencies, athletic commitments, or religious holidays. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to catch up on the work we have done during class. Also note that showing up more than ten minutes late to class automatically translates into an unexcused absence for that class meeting.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

For information on what constitutes academic integrity, see the College's official policies here: <http://legacy.lclark.edu/dept/pathfind/academicinteg.html> If you haven't already done

so, take the tutorial on how to avoid plagiarism available here:

<http://library.lclark.edu/reference/plagiarism/index.htm>

Accommodations

Please come and speak with me if you are having difficulties with the course material, readings, or assignments. I am also very happy to work with students who are in need of special accommodations. If you anticipate needing special accommodations, contact the Student Support Services Office to discuss your situation. That office will contact me, and we can take appropriate action to make sure all your needs are accommodated.