First-Year Seminar 1000:73
Graphic Stories
Fall 2013
Tuesday/Thursday, 3-4:15, Class: St. Robert’s Hall 366

Instructors:
Dr. Alexandra Neel
Office: UNH 3409
Office hours: W 9:30am-2:30; T 4:20-5:20
Email: aneel@lmu.edu
Phone: 310-338-2986

Courtney Pina
Office: UNH 3225
Office hours: R 12:30-2:30pm
Email Courtney.Pina@lmu.edu
Phone: 310-338-5826

Course Description:
In this seminar, we will explore the relationship between image and text in illustrated books, ranging from 19th-century illustrated stories and poems to the 21st-century graphic novel. We'll start in the nineteenth century with Christina Rossetti’s illustrated poem “Goblin Market” and move on to Sidney Paget’s illustrations for Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes story “A Scandal in Bohemia,” interpreting the multiple, even contradictory roles images play in each of these works. Once students have gained a knowledge of how to read visual images and how to talk about their presence in a particular text, we'll develop that expertise by looking at graphic novels such as Art Spiegelman’s *Maus I: A Survivor’s Tale* and Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis: A Story of a Childhood*.

Learning Outcomes:
Upon successfully completing this course

- Students will understand and appreciate the intellectual rigor and academic excellence that defines an LMU education
- Students will be able to engage critically and reflectively in scholarly discourse.
- Students will learn to read critically and carefully:
- Students will exercise critical thinking in oral discussion and writing
- Students will be able to evaluate sources for quality (e.g., by learning to differentiate between scholarly and popular sources).
- Students will acquire research skills including use of library catalog and electronic databases to retrieve books or articles, whether in print or online.
Tentative Nature of the Syllabus:
If necessary, the readings, assignments, and due dates are subject to revision by
the instructor; students are responsible for any changes or modifications
distributed in class or posted on MYLMU Connect. I will communicate with the
entire class using MYLMU Connect, so it is essential that you regularly check
your lion.lmu.edu email address or forward your lion account email to your
preferred email address.

Grading:
Grading Scale: A=94-100; A-=90-93; B+=87-89; B=84-86; B-=80-83; C+=75-79;
C=70-74; C-=65-69; D=60-64. Your grade will reflect your achievements not your
effort in this class both inside and outside the classroom. If you are concerned about
your grade, come to see me so we can discuss reading, study, and writing strategies.
I will not discuss grades by email or over the phone.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
Alexie, Sherman. The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian.
Bechdel, Alison. Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic.
Barry, Lynda. One Hundred! Demons!
McCloud, Scott. Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art
Satrapi, Marjane. The Complete Persepolis.
Spiegelman, Art. Maus I.
Spiegelman, Art. Maus II.

All texts are available for purchase at the LMU Bookstore.
These texts are REQUIRED. In other words, I will not allow you to take my class
unless you demonstrate that you have purchased, borrowed, or rented these
texts for the entire semester. You need to acquire print versions of all assigned
readings (unless informed otherwise in class). Readings marked with an * will be
made available either as pdfs or on our Course Website. You must print out
these texts and bring them to class. If you arrive at class and realize you do not
have your assigned reading, you should leave class and retrieve it.

Four Imperatives:
1. Come to Class
2. Stay in the classroom for the entire duration of the class (1 hour and 15
minutes)
3. Do the Reading for Every Class
4. Bring All Required Readings to Class

Take a moment to consider whether you can follow these basic rules. There can
be a variety of reasons why a student in any given semester cannot fulfill these
requirements in one or more of his/her classes. If you honestly believe that you
will be unable to fulfill these requirements in this class, please switch classes.
These are fundamental requirements, and our class will not succeed unless
every student meets them.
How to contact me:
Outside office hours, the best way to contact me is by email. And please do not hesitate to do so. But you need to allow me 24 hours to respond. While I am keen to help students outside of the classroom, I will only respond to emails that have these THREE basic features:
1. “Graphic Stories” written in the Subject Heading
2. The salutation: “Dear Dr. Neel:”
3. An appropriate sign-off: “Best, Miranda” or “Sincerely, Jack” etc.
While we are all used to writing casual emails to our close friends and family, you are emailing me in a professional capacity. I expect the tone and language of your email to reflect that.

Course Work/Requirements:
- Class participation: 10%
- Bi-weekly postings on class discussion board: 10%
- Information literacy—Four Assignments: 10%
- Response paper (5 pages): 10%
- Graphic Story (2-5 pages): 10%
- Oral presentation: 10%
- Annotated bibliography (3-5): 10%
- Literature Review and proposal: 10%
- Final Research Paper (10-12 pages): 20%

Attendance: I take attendance. You may miss two classes. Unless your subsequent absences are due to a religious observance or a medical condition (in which case you will need to provide a doctor’s note), I will mark your final grade down one ½ grade: Thus, a B+ final grade will become a B. I will mark 2 late appearances as an absence. I take attendance for you AND YOUR REQUIRED TEXT for that day. In other words, you OR YOUR TEXT may miss a couple of classes. In the event of you not bringing your book to class for a third time, I will request that you leave the class.

Class participation: Come to class expecting me to call on you. Most classes will mix lecture with class discussion of the readings. To open discussion, I may ask a student a question of detail in a text or point out a specific passage or panels that I want us to look at together. Therefore, your reading preparation should be active: Read attentively, noting down key features of the text, underlining keywords and passages. Informed and focused discussion can only happen if you have completed the required reading assignment before each class. After each class, I will grade your level of participation for that class. Participation Grades: F=Absent; D=Unprepared and/or disengaged or missing part of the class (late arrival and/or early departure); C=Attentive throughout but making limited contributions to the discussion; B=Actively engaged throughout, and making meaningful contributions to the discussion; A=Actively engaged throughout and making not only meaningful but astute contributions that move the discussion forward and/or combine insights into a coherent whole.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

• **Information Literacy: 10%**
  Information Literacy entails the ability to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically, developing the critical thinking skills that form the basis of lifelong learning. We will be spending some time in the course on information literacy as it relates to the study of graphic novels.

**Information Literacy Learning Outcomes for FYS**
1) Be able to evaluate sources for quality (e.g., by learning to differentiate between scholarly and popular sources)
2) Acquire research skills including use of the library catalog and electronic databases to retrieve books or articles, whether in print or online

**Information Literacy Tutorial**
During the course of the term students are required to work through the Lion’s Guide to Research & the Library tutorial which is made up of four online modules accessible through MyLMU Connect. Following each module you will take an online quiz on the material covered. The four quizzes may be taken only one time each. The modules and completion dates are:

1. Starting Your Assignment (module & quiz) - complete by 9/9/13
2. Types of Information (module & quiz) - complete by 9/23/13
3. Finding and Evaluating Information (module & quiz) - complete by 10/7/13
4. Using Information Ethically (module & quiz) - complete by 10/21/13
The modules may be found through MyLMU. Just follow these steps:

• Login to MyLMU Connect at [http://mylmuconnect.lmu.edu](http://mylmuconnect.lmu.edu)
• Click on the course title “Graphic Stories” to enter the course page.
• Click on the “Information Literacy” link in the course menu on the left-hand side of the page.
• Click the link for the Information Literacy tutorial Module you have been assigned. The tutorial will open in a new window.

The Library has created a FFYS 1000 LibGuide located at [http://libguides.lmu.edu/ffys1000](http://libguides.lmu.edu/ffys1000)

• **Discussion board postings (5) and in-class participation: 10%**
  Postings will allow you to express your ideas in a less formal setting, encouraging you to work on different styles of address, as well as working on your skill of asking pertinent questions about the assigned text.

• **Response paper (5 pages): 10%**
  This assignment asks for a close reading of a few panels or one illustration and its surrounding text. What is the relationship between image and word? Do they feed off one another? Do the drawings offer an interpretation of the text?

• **Graphic story (2-5 pages) 10%**
  Using Linda Barry’s *One Hundred Demons!* as a model, you are invited to create a graphic story of your own. (If the idea of drawing sends you into a panic, you
are welcome to use photographs!) This exercise will give you an intimate idea of what goes into creating a comic, and where the medium’s strengths and possible limitations lie. You’ll also offer a 1-page analysis of your comic.

• **Annotated bibliography (5-8 annotations): 10%**
  An annotated bibliography of the your chosen author(s) and/or topic in preparation for your final research paper. For example, a student might prepare an annotated bibliography on the scholarship that engages with Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home* and her use of modernist texts, such as James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

• **Literature review and proposal: 10%**
  You will attach a 2-3 page *review* of the scholarship that you read. The goal of the review is to summarize what the scholarship has said about your topic and clarify how your work will either synthesize or offer something new on this subject.
  Your *proposal* (250-300 words) “pitches” your paper: You need to describe your introduction or paper in way that sounds like it is worth sponsoring. In the case of an original research paper, you need to provide a working thesis.

• **Final research paper (10-12): 20%**
  Your close reading, annotated bibliography, and literature review are the building blocks of this assignment. You will also be producing multiple drafts of this final project, which you will workshop with me, your writing instructor Courtney Pina, and peers. (See Appendix A)

• **Oral presentation (10 minutes): 10%**
  The last week and half of class will be dedicated to a conference-style sessions where you will present your final research project in an oral format.

**Expectations for Classroom Behavior:**
RESPECT FOR SELF AND OTHERS: As an LMU Lion, by the Lion’s Code, you are pledged to join the discourse of the academy with honesty of voice and integrity of scholarship and to show respect for staff, professors, and other students.

**Special Accommodations:** Students with special needs who require reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office. Any student who currently has a documented disability (ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning, Physical, or Psychiatric) needing academic accommodation should contact the DSS Office (Daum Hall 2nd Floor, 310-338-4216) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit [www.lmu.edu/dss](http://www.lmu.edu/dss) for additional information. Note that neither instructor can grant these aforementioned accommodations unless directed to by LMU’s DSS Office.

**Late Submissions:** I will only consider offering extensions in extreme situations. I reserve the right to grant these extensions fully at my discretion and on a case-by-case situation. In other words, just because I grant an extension to X, it does
NOT mean I will grant them to Y. Generally, I will not grant an extension unless one is requested at least a week in advance of a due date.

**Extra Credit:** I do not offer and will not consider requests for extra credit.

**Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism:** It is never permissible to turn in any work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source (including the internet) without properly acknowledging the source. If I find any student has plagiarized any written work submitted for this course (summaries, posts, worksheets, or papers), I will fail this student from the course. Loyola Marymount University’s *Community Standards Booklet* clearly states what constitutes Academic Dishonesty. Every student at LMU is expected to read and understand these guidelines: “It is the student’s responsibility to make sure that his/her work meets the standards set forth in the Honor Code. If the student is unclear about how these definitions and standards apply to his/her work, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor to clarify the ambiguity.” In other words, if you have any questions about the code, come see me. If you plagiarize, I will fail you even if you have not educated yourself on the standards set forth in the honor code. You can find the same information regarding Academic Dishonesty in the *Undergraduate Bulletin*. The *Undergraduate Bulletin* is available online.

**Electronic Devices:** Unless specifically directed, I do not permit the use of electronic devices (including cell phones and laptop computers) in class. All electronic devices must be turned off and put out of sight during class-time. When class begins, I want electronic devices to be out of sight. I do not want to have to ask you to put these devices away. Please don’t force me to play the role of a high-school teacher.

**Absolutely No Texting:** I will ask any student reading or writing texts after the class has started to leave for that session and will assign them a 0 for participation for that day.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

*Week one:*
T  8/27  Introduction—*What are graphic stories?*
W  8/28  *First Blackboard posting on “Goblin Market” due by 8pm*
R  8/29  Christina Rossetti “Goblin Market”*

*The Art of Illustration: How do pictures impact our interpretations of a text?*

*Week two:*
T  9/3  Arthur Conan Doyle, “A Scandal in Bohemia”*
W  9/2  *Second Blackboard posting due by 8pm on “Strangers”*
R  9/5  Toni Morrison, “Strangers”*

*What are comics? -- Defining a Medium*

*Week three:*
M  9/9  *First Library Assignment due*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Scott McCloud, <em>Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art</em> (1-117)</td>
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<td>9/17</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Lynda Barry. <em>One Hundred Demons!</em> (1-60)</td>
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<td>9/19</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Lynda Barry. <em>One Hundred Demons!</em> (63-145)</td>
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<td>9/23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Second Library Assignment due</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/24</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Lynda Barry. <em>One Hundred Demons!</em> (146-225)</td>
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<td>9/26</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Editing and Revision Skills/Peer Workshops (DRAFTS DUE in class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Alison Bechdel, <em>Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic</em> (1-86)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/3</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Alison Bechdel, <em>Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic</em> (89-150)</td>
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<td>10/7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Third Library Assignment due</td>
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<td>10/8</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Writing Workshop: Constraint-Based Writing/Finding Your Voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Alison Bechdel, <em>Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic</em> (151-232)</td>
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<td>10/15</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Marjane Satrapi, <em>Persepolis</em> (1-79)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/17</td>
<td>R</td>
<td><em>Persepolis</em> (80-153)</td>
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<td>10/18</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>GRAPHIC STORY DUE by 4pm</td>
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<td>10/21</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Fourth Library Assignment due</td>
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<td>10/22</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Marjane Satrapi, (155-245); Writing Workshop: Research Writing/Finding Effective Sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/23</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Third Blackboard Posting due by 8pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/24</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Marjane Satrapi, (246-341)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Art Spiegelman, <em>Maus I, A Survivor’s Tale</em>, (1-95); [deadline for topic approval for final research paper]</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Fourth Blackboard posting due by 8pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Spiegelman, <em>Maus I, A Survivor’s Tale</em>, (95-159)</td>
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Week eleven:
T   11/5   Maus II, And Here My Troubles Began (1-70)
R   11/7   Maus II (71-136)
      ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY due in class

Why comics?

Week twelve:
T   11/12  Alexie, Sherman. The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (1-73)
R   11/14  Alexie, Sherman. The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (75-149)
      LITERATURE REVIEW DUE and PROPOSAL due in class

Week thirteen:
M   11/18  Fifth Blackboard posting due by 8pm Monday
T   11/19  Sherman, Alexie. The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (150-229) and “Interview with Ellen Fourney”
R   11/21  Writing workshop: Final Paper Revisions
            DRAFTS DUE in class

Week fourteen:
T   11/26  Oral presentations; First revision of DRAFT DUE in class
R   11/28  No classes—Thanksgiving holiday

Week fifteen:
T   12/3   Oral presentations
R   12/5   Oral presentations and conclusion

FINAL REVISED RESEARCH PAPER DUE: Thursday, December 12th at noon in my office.
Graphic Stories Writing Instruction  
Courtney Pina

Role of the Writing Instructor:  
My role is to provide students with guidance in presenting, developing, and revising their written ideas, as well as working toward stylistic objectives of clarity and coherence. My job is to teach and reinforce students’ ability to write in ways that emphasize intellectual force. Together, we will work both inside and outside of the classroom to ensure you are writing with confidence and purpose.

Learning Outcomes:  
Writing skills include the ability to understand and engage the discourse, rhetorical situation, and written conventions of a particular discipline; to express and interpret ideas—both your own and those of others—in clear written language; and to critique and revise written work, both your own and those of others.

This First Year Seminar aims to establish the foundational writing skills that will be vital for success in students’ subsequent writing flagged courses and beyond.

Writing Sessions:  
These scheduled writing intensive sessions will be taught by me and will involve a variety of writing exercises, peer workshops, and class discussions.

- Week 3: Thursday, September 12th—The Basics of Close Reading/Crafting a Thesis
- Week 5: Thursday, September 26th—Editing and Revision Skills/Peer Workshops
- Week 7: Tuesday, October 8th—Constraint-Based Writing/Finding Your Voice
- Week 9: Tuesday, October 22nd—Research Writing/Finding Effective Sources
- Week 14: Thursday, November 21st—Final Revisions

Conferences:  
There will be four mandatory conferences. These will be one-on-one scheduled meetings with me to discuss your progress in the class and/or upcoming assignments. While these four rounds of conferences are required, I will hold regularly scheduled office hours that I encourage all students to attend.

Conference sessions are strategically scheduled to occur near assignment due dates: Week 2 (meet and greet), Week 5, Week 8, and Week 13. During Week 15 I will hold extended office hours and have optional conference sign-ups.

Classroom Policies:  
All statements and policies included on Dr. Neel’s course syllabus must be followed during the Writing Component of this section, specifically the policies on Academic Honesty, Classroom Behavior, Respect for Self and Others, and Electronic Devices.
This course will culminate with you researching, writing, and revising a scholarly introduction or an original research project. You will need to discuss the topic with me in person during my office hours. I must approve this essay topic before you write it. You can email me your initial idea, but we will need to spend some time discussing it. My criteria for approval: The project needs to be dealing with a topic that can be adequately treated in a 10-12 page paper; I need to have a clear sense that you are drawing on and thinking about the specific texts and questions that we have been discussing in class.

The Timetable:

Annotated bibliography (11/7); literature review and proposal (11/14):
The bibliography (5-8 entries) is a list of book chapter length studies of and journal articles on your chosen author(s)/text(s)/subject(s). The list must contain between 5 and 8 entries and must be formatted as an MLA Works Cited.

Literature Review (2-3 pages): You will attach a 2-3 page review of the scholarship that you read. The goal of the review is to summarize what the scholarship has said about your topic and clarify how your work will either synthesize or offer something new on this subject.

Your proposal (250-300 words): Your proposal “pitches” your paper: You need to describe your introduction or paper in way that it sounds like it is worth sponsoring. In the case of an original research paper, you need to provide a working thesis.

Research Paper (10-12 pages): Due Date: Tuesday, November 26, in class
This paper can either be a scholarly introduction or an original research paper (see below for more details). For all papers in this class, I expect in-text citation according to the MLA documentation style and a Works Cited which provides full citation for the selected text(s). Typos, misspellings, inappropriate formatting, and grammatical errors will affect your grade.

Significant Revision: Due Date: Thursday, December 12, in my office by noon.
Based on Courtney Pina and/or my reading of your research paper, we will send out a “reader's report” offering suggestions for further research, refinement of your argument, etc. 10% of your overall grade will depend on a substantial revision of the paper that demonstrates that you have attempted to address our concerns and to incorporate our suggestions.

What is the purpose of a research paper?
To present an original, insightful, persuasive, and engaging treatment of a topic that comes out of our readings, our discussion, the syllabus, or our library visit.

Why do you do research?
1. To learn more about your topic.
2. Research will help you demonstrate to your readers that you are knowledgeable about your topic and the scholarship on it.

Where does close reading and interpretation come in?
1. If you are writing about a text, a group of texts, a figure, a motif, or a genre, then your research will help you see things about those things that you did not see before.
2. You will be exposed to other readers’ interpretations.
What can I write about for my research paper?
You may want to write about

- A text or a set of texts
- A theme in a text or a set of texts (identity in *Persepolis*)
- A motif or interrelated motifs in a text or a set of texts (animals in *One Hundred Demons*)
- A formal aspect of comics, i.e., the use of gutter space in *Maus*; collage, or origami in *One Hundred Demons*; photographs in *Fun Home* and/or *Maus*.

Two Possible Avenues:

1. **A Scholarly Introduction:** You can write an engaging and informative scholarly introduction to your topic. Imagine a collection of essays called *The LMU Companion to Graphic Stories* that presented incisive academic introductions to key texts/themes/motifs/genres in the literature and literary culture covered by our course. As a contributor, your goal is to synthesize current research on your topic in a clear and informative manner that will illuminate your topic and engage your audience.

2. **An Original Research Paper:** You can write an original research paper on a topic of your choice. The goal in this case will be not only to show that you are familiar with the research in your area, but also to offer an original contribution to this area either by offering a counter-interpretation of the material you are looking at or by discovering something that the research has overlooked or misread.

**A Recommendation:** Begin your research as a scholarly introduction (Option 1). If you think you have an original argument or reading to offer, you can easily modify your initial work to write an original research paper (Option 2).

**IMPORTANT!** If your paper is carefully researched, thoughtful, insightful, and engaging, I consider either option of equal value.