

**San José State University**  
**Department of English & Comparative Literature**  
**English 20: The Graphic Novel, Section 01, Fall 2021**

**Course and Contact Information**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Johnny Damm
<b>Office Location:</b>	FOB 118
<b>Email:</b>	john.damm@sjsu.edu
<b>Office Hours:</b>	W 1:00-2:00/ Zoom meetings by appt.
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	M/T Asynchronous Online; W 10:45-12:00
<b>Classroom:</b>	Yoshihiro Uchida Hall 124
<b>GE Category:</b>	Letters C2

**Course Learning Management and Messaging**

Course materials such as syllabus, readings, handouts, notes, and assignment instructions can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. Please set your Canvas notifications so that you receive announcements, which will be sent out periodically. You are responsible for monitoring Canvas and completing the weekly Canvas modules throughout the semester.

**Hybrid Format**

Our class has two distinct modes. Once a week, students are required to complete a Canvas module—including watching recorded lectures, contributing to discussion boards, and completing other assigned activities, and on Wednesdays, we will meet in person.

**ENGL 20 Course Description**

Due to three major superhero “crazes”—one occurring during the late thirties/early forties, one occurring during the sixties, and one occurring now—U.S. comics have become particularly associated with superheroes. For our class, however, we shall attempt to develop a wider view of the field, exploring U.S. comics as a medium rich in a wide variety of genres and forms and attracting a diverse readership. For the first half of the semester, we will trace the history of the comic book from its pulp origins to now. In the second half, we will read and analyze contemporary works. Throughout the semester, we will pay particular attention to the comic book’s long history of depicting immigrants and outsiders and the medium’s fraught relationship to notions of patriotism and citizenship.

**English 20 GE Course Goals (GELO)**

For the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, context, and nature of the subject.
4. Articulate relations among culture, history, and texts.

For General Education Area C2 (Letters), students shall be able to:

1. Recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns.
2. Respond to such works by writing both research-based critical analyses and personal responses.
3. Write clearly and effectively.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO): Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Examine significant works of the human intellect and imagination
2. Understand the historical and cultural contexts in which such texts were created
3. Recognize the accomplishments and issues related to women and diverse cultures reflected in such texts

## **ENGL 20 Course Requirements and Assignments**

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, you are expected to spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on.

### Reading

You will be assigned reading before every class, whether online or in-person. These readings are the central component of our class, and it is absolutely essential that you keep up with them.

### Assignments

*Two Essays*: Students will write two essays, one an analysis of a historical U.S. comics genre and one an analysis of a contemporary comic book.

*Two Exams*: In the first half of the semester, students will complete two exams delivered through Canvas. The exams will require students to demonstrate basic comprehension of U.S. comics history and key aspects of the form.

*Three Short Comics*: **NO DRAWING ABILITY REQUIRED.** One of the best ways to understand the distinct language of comics is to experiment with the comics page. So, over the course of the semester, students will complete a comic strip, a one-page narrative comic, and a three-page nonfiction comic. The comics can be made in a variety of ways, using digital tools, collage, and or drawing. Technical ability is not judged in the evaluation of these comics.

*Module Completion:* The last crucial element of this class is simply participation. Modules will most often be a mix of short recorded lectures and other short videos, reading, and required discussion board threads. Students will receive 100 for participation when the weekly module is completed, and 0 when it is not.

### Assignment Word Count and Learning Goals

Assignment	Word Count	GELO
Essay 1	1,000-1,500	GE 1,2,3 ED 1,2,3
Essay 2	1,250-1,750	GE 1,2,3 ED 1,2,3
2 Exams	Varies; Min. 750	GE 1,2,3 ED 1,2,3
3 comics	Varies	GE 2,3 ED 3
Module Discussion Responses	Varies	

### Required Texts

The following texts can be purchased through the bookstore or any other bookseller:

*Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, Scott McCloud; ISBN 9780060976255 (any edition can be purchased)

*The Girl from H.O.P.P.E.R.S.*, Jaime Hernandez; ISBN 9781560978510

*Hot Comb*, Ebony Flowers; ISBN 9781770463486

*Paying the Land*, Joe Sacco; ISBN 9781627799034

*The Magic Fish*, Trung Le Nguyen; ISBN 9781984851598

Students are also required to have and use a Hoopla account, provided free from the San Jose Public Library. We will be reading the following titles through Hoopla (free to checkout):

*My Favorite Thing is Monsters*, Emil Ferris; ebook in Hoopla

### Other Readings

All other readings will provided as PDFs or checked out through Hoopla. These include a variety of comics from the late 1930s to the 1960s and excerpts from:

*Comic Book History of Comics*, Fred Van Lente and Ryan Dunlavey (PDF)

*Invisible Men: The Trailblazing Black Artists of Comic Books*, Ken Quatro (Hoopla)

*Pretty in Ink: North American Women Cartoonists*, Trina Robbins (PDF)

*American Comic Book Chronicles: The 1950s* (PDF)

*Amazing Spider-Man Masterworks Vol. 1*, Lee and Ditko (Hoopla)

*The Complete Wimmen's Comix* (Hoopla)

### Grading Policy

Essay # 1 22%

Essay # 2 23%

2 Exams 20%

3 Comics 15%

Participation (Module Completion): 20%

A missed exam will result in a zero, and late papers or other assignments will be docked up to one full letter grade each day they are late.

### About Grades

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A= excellent; B= above average; C= average; D= below average; F= failure. Courses graded according to the A, B, C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC shall replace D or F. In such cases, NC shall also substitute for W (or Withdrawal) because neither grade (NC or W) affects students’ GPA.

A (92-100); A- (90-91); B+ (88-89); B (82-87); B- (80-81); C+ (78-79); C (70-77); C- (70-71); D+ (68-69); D (62-67); D- (60-61); F (<60)

### **Academic Dishonesty**

All students are responsible for knowing and observing University policies regarding academic dishonesty. See University policy: "[Academic Integrity](#)".

### **Classroom Protocol**

You need to participate, complete the modules on time, and be courteous to your peers and to your teacher.

### **University Policies**

The link below contains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc.:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/index.html>

## ENGL 20: The Graphic Novel, Spring 2021

*This schedule is subject to change with fair notice: you are responsible for any changes made in class or through email*

### Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Aug 23/24	ONLINE CLASS TOPIC: Myths of U.S. Comic Books; Introductions HOMEWORK: Read “Early Comic Strips” (PDF in Canvas); “CBHoC 1: Comic Strips” (PDF in Canvas); <i>Understanding Comics</i> (Chapter 1, pp. 1-23)
1	Aug 25	IN-PERSON CLASS TOPIC: Comic Strips HOMEWORK: Read <i>Action Comics</i> #1 (PDF); <i>Action Comics</i> #8 (first story; PDF) <i>Superman</i> #53 (first story; PDF); <i>CBHoC 2: Pulp</i> (PDF); <i>CHoC 3: First Comics/ Early Superheroes</i> (PDF)
2	Aug 30/31	ONLINE CLASS TOPIC: Early U.S. Comic Books, Superman HOMEWORK: Read <i>Detective Comics</i> #27 (first story; PDF); <i>Detective Comics</i> #33 (first story; PDF); <i>Sensation Comics</i> # 1 (first story; PDF); <i>Captain America Comics</i> # 1 (first story, PDF); <i>CBHoC 4: Early Comics Industry</i> (PDF)
2	Sep 1	IN-PERSON CLASS TOPIC: Early Superheroes and Pulp Heroes; look through <i>Mystery Men</i> as a class HOMEWORK: Read <i>Young Romance</i> #1 (PDF); <i>Teenage Romances</i> # 1 (PDF), <i>Invisible Men</i> (“Clarence Matthew Baker,” pp. 125-150, Hoopla); <i>CBHoC 5: Romance Comics</i> (PDF)
3	Sep 6/7	HOLIDAY
3	Sep 8	IN-PERSON CLASS TOPIC: Romance Comics/ Educational Comics; look through <i>Classics Illustrated</i> as a class HOMEWORK: Read <i>Crime Does Not Pay</i> #59 (PDF), excerpt from <i>Pretty in Ink</i> (PDF); <i>CBHoC 6: Crime Comics</i> (PDF);
4	Sep 13/14	ONLINE

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		CLASS TOPIC: Crime Comics
4	Sep 15	IN-PERSON CLASS ACTIVITY: Exam # 1 HOMEWORK: Read <i>Vault of Horror</i> #30; <i>Tomb of Terror</i> #4; <i>Invisible Men</i> (“Alvin Carl Hollingsworth,” 150-173, Hoopla); <i>CBHoC</i> 7: Horror Comics (PDF)
5	Sep 20/21	ONLINE CLASS TOPIC: Horror HOMEWORK: Read <i>Invisible Men</i> (“Orrin C. Evans,” et al., 204-229); <i>CBHoC</i> 8: Senate Hearing to Comics Code (PDF); excerpt from <i>American Comic Book Chronicles: The 1950s</i> (PDF)
5	Sep 22	IN-PERSON CLASS TOPIC: The Comics Code HOMEWORK: Read <i>Fantastic Four</i> # 1, <i>X-Men</i> #1, <i>Avengers</i> # 4, <i>Understanding Comics</i> (Chapter 2, pp. 24-59); <i>CBHoC</i> : 9 Marvel Comics
6	Sep 27/28	ONLINE CLASS TOPIC: Marvel in the Sixties; Jack Kirby HOMEWORK: <i>Amazing Spider-Man Masterworks Vol.1</i> ( <i>Amazing Fantasy</i> #15, pp. 7-18; <i>The Amazing Spider-Man</i> #1, pp. 19-33; <i>The Amazing Spider-Man</i> #4, pp. 92-113; Hoopla)
6	Sep 29	IN-PERSON CLASS TOPIC: Marvel in the Sixties; Steve Ditko HOMEWORK: Read <i>Zap</i> # 1 (CONTENT WARNING; PDF); <i>Enon</i> #1 (PDF) <i>Understanding Comics</i> (Chapter 3, pp. 60-93)
7	Oct 4/5	ONLINE CLASS TOPIC: Underground Comics HOMEWORK: Read <i>The Complete Wimmen’s Comix</i> (Introduction: “babes and women,” pp. 8-15; <i>Wimmen’s Comix</i> # 1, pp. 53-88, Hoopla); <i>Gay Comix</i> #1 (PDF)
7	Oct 6	IN-PERSON CLASS ACTIVITY: Feminist and Queer Comics
8	Oct 11/12	ONLINE

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		CLASS TOPIC: EXAM # 2 HOMEWORK: Read <i>Girl From H.O.P.P.E.R.S.</i> (pp. 1-93)
8	Oct 13	IN-PERSON CLASS TOPIC: <i>Girl From H.O.P.P.E.R.S.</i> HOMEWORK: Read <i>GFH</i> (pp. 94-194)
9	Oct 18/19	ONLINE CLASS TOPIC: <i>Girl From H.O.P.P.E.R.S.</i> HOMEWORK: Read <i>GFH</i> (finish book) Make Comic Strip
9	Oct 20	IN-PERSON COMIC STRIP DUE CLASS TOPIC: <i>Girl From H.O.P.P.E.R.S.</i> ; Intro to Essay # 1 HOMEWORK: Read <i>My Favorite Thing is Monsters</i> (pp. TBA, Hoopla)
10	Oct 25/26	ONLINE CLASS TOPIC: <i>My Favorite Thing is Monsters</i> (Hoopla); Essay # 1 Writing Tips HOMEWORK: Read <i>MFTiM</i> (pp. TBA, Hoopla)
10	Oct 27	IN-PERSON CLASS TOPIC: <i>My Favorite Thing is Monsters</i> (Hoopla) HOMEWORK: Read <i>MFTiM</i> (pp. TBA, Hoopla); Finish Essay # 1
11	Nov 1/2	ONLINE CLASS TOPIC: <i>My Favorite Thing is Monsters</i> (Hoopla) ESSAY # 1 DUE HOMEWORK: Read <i>Hot Comb</i> (pp. 1-89)
11	Nov 3	IN-PERSON CLASS TOPIC: <i>Hot Comb</i> HOMEWORK: Read <i>Hot Comb</i> (finish book); made One-Page Comic
12	Nov 8/9	ONLINE ONE-PAGE Comic Due

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		CLASS TOPIC: <i>Hot Comb</i> HOMEWORK: Read <i>Understanding Comics</i> (Chapters 4-5, pp. 94-137)
12	Nov 10	IN-PERSON ONE-PAGE COMIC DUE CLASS TOPIC: <i>Hot Comb</i> HOMEWORK: Read <i>Paying the Land</i> (Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-160)
13	Nov 15/16	ONLINE CLASS TOPIC: <i>Paying the Land</i> HOMEWORK: Read <i>Paying the Land</i> (finish book)
13	Nov 17	IN-PERSON CLASS TOPIC: <i>Paying the Land</i> HOMEWORK: Read <i>Understanding Comics</i> (Chapter 6, pp. 138-161)
14	Nov 22/23	ONLINE CLASS TOPIC: <i>Paying the Land</i> ESSAY # 2 DUE HOMEWORK: Read <i>The Magic Fish</i> (pp. 1-124)
14	Nov 24	HOLIDAY CLASS TOPIC: <i>The Magic Fish</i> HOMEWORK: Read <i>The Magic Fish</i> (finish book)
15	Nov 29/30	ONLINE CLASS TOPIC: <i>The Magic Fish</i>
15	Dec 1	IN-PERSON CLASS TOPIC: <i>The Magic Fish</i> HOMEWORK: Read <i>Understanding Comics</i> (Chapter 9, pp. 193-end); <i>CBHoC</i> 10: Manga (PDF)
	Dec 6	ONLINE CLASS TOPIC: Bringing it all Together
Final	Dec 8	FINAL PROJECT DUE by 12:00 pm, Wednesday, December 8