

## English 4317: Medicine in Graphic Narrative

Online

Fall 2018

Texas A&M University - Central Texas

**Instructor:** Dr. Jeff Kirchoff

**Office:** Founder's Hall 2170

**Email:** [jeff.kirchoff@tamuct.edu](mailto:jeff.kirchoff@tamuct.edu) (this is the best way to reach me)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 11-12; Thursday 11-12 and 1-4; other times may be available by appointment

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### **COURSE OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION**

#### *Official Catalog Description*

An in-depth study of one major theme in literary history. Topics vary and the course can be repeated for credit if taken under a different emphasis.

#### *A Note from Dr. Kirchoff*

##### **What is Graphic Medicine?**

The term graphic medicine is most often attributed to British doctor Ian Williams and has come to mean “the intersection of the medium of comics and the discourse of healthcare” (Czerwiec et al., 2015, 1). Andrew J. Kunka elaborates, noting that “any representation of the medical profession, disease, or health-related topic can fall under its purview,” (n.p.) which suggests that graphic medicine can span a variety of genres ranging from doctor/nurse romance comics to comic journalism to public health (instructional) comics—and just about everything in between. Sathyaraj Venkatesan and Sweetha Saji offer a more specific focus for graphic medicine, noting that these texts can “address various socio-cultural issues impinging health care such as medical negligence; the vexed doctor-patient relationship; industrialism of health care; patient identity, role of insurance providers; challenges of caretaking; demands of being a doctor in a commercialized sector; among others” (222). Interdisciplinary in nature, graphic medicine has drawn the interest of nurses, medical doctors, artists, literary critics, and rhetorical critics, among others. We will spend the first week of class reading articles that more fully flesh out what graphic medicine is and why it is an important field of study.

#### Works Cited

Kasthuri, Raghavi Ravi and Sathyaraj Venkatesan. “Picturing Illness: History, Poetics, and

Graphic Medicine." *Research & Humanities in Medical Education*, vol. 2, 2015.  
<https://www.rhime.in/ojs/index.php?journal=rhime&page=article&op=view&path%5B%5D=9>. Accessed 17 April 2018.

Kunka, Andrew J. *Autobiographical Comics*. Bloomsbury, 2017.

Williams, Ian. "Graphic Medicine: Comics as Medical Narrative." *Medical Humanities*, vol. 38, 2012, pp. 21-27. doi:10.1136/medhum-2011-010093.

### **What are we going to learn in this class?**

Our exploration of graphic medicine will purposefully maintain the interdisciplinary nature this field of study is known for. While our conversations will primarily be grounded in literary and rhetorical studies, we will not ignore the commentary embedded in these narratives regarding illness, health literacy, caregiving, and the representation of medical professions.

- Drawing on literary studies, we will explore how metaphor, allusion, symbolism, and characterization (among others) manifest itself in these stories; beyond simply identifying these tropes, we'll examine why these tropes are used in particular ways and what effect this has on the reader.
- Drawing on rhetorical studies, we'll consistently examine the rhetorical situation of the texts we read, looking specifically at the purpose of each graphic novel (paying particular attention to how we can tell what this purpose is), the intended audience of the graphic novel, and the context each graphic novel was written in.
- Synthesizing literary and rhetorical studies, we'll pay particular attention to the design of each graphic narrative, focusing on how the visuals complement the alphabetic text to create a rich, rhetorically powerful literary text that is looking to make a very specific comment on an aspect of medicine.
- These discussions—which are embedded into the activities, readings, and homework of the course—will illuminate how graphic narratives are well suited to tell these personal stories while simultaneously examining how these selected texts contribute to our understanding of a variety of topics associated with medicine (broadly speaking)

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, students should:

- Be able to define and explain the goals of graphic medicine.
- Understand several ways to analyze and discuss graphic novels as literature.
- Articulate how graphic narrative is well suited to discuss medicine-related issues.
- Develop critical thinking skills as it pertains to literary and visual analysis.
- Craft their own graphic medicine narrative and reflect on the rhetorical and literary strategies used to create their story.

### **COMMUNICATING WITH DR. KIRCHOFF**

Email is the best way to reach me. I typically check my email at least once a day, and I will make a good faith effort to respond to email within 24 hours of my receipt of your message. If you

would like to meet in person, I am available during office hours, and am often amenable to appointments outside my regular office hours.

### **ACCESSING COURSE MATERIAL**

As this course is 100% online, we will be making use of the TAMUCT Canvas system. To access course material, go to <https://tamuct.onecampus.com> and select (or search for) “Canvas.” Enter your user-name and password, find our class, and you’ll be ready to go.

### **MODULES**

Course content will be available in weekly modules, available on the left-hand toolbar in Canvas. I will post new modules every Friday (the exception being the first week, when the first module will be available on Monday, 8.27); weekly work such as assigned reading, reading responses, discussion questions, quizzes, and other online work will always be due Friday evenings at 5 PM CST. As you will see, oftentimes you will need to complete module work in a certain order (usually quizzes followed by reading responses). Please note that the modules will always be very clear about what needs to be turned in and when.

You are responsible for the material posted in the module. The tentative schedule in this document offers a broad overview of the topics we will discuss and the reading assignment. However, it does not indicate the specific reading responses, discussion questions, online activities, or supplemental material—all of that will be available in the modules. Thus, it is imperative that you regularly check the modules, read the modules, and complete the work in the modules.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

*Cancer Vixen* by Marchetto ISBN 978-0375714740

*Epileptic* by David B. ISBN 978-0375714689

*It’s a Bird* by Seagle ISBN 978-1401272883

*Marbles* by Forney ISBN 978-1592407323

*Mom’s Cancer* by Fies ISBN 978-0810971073

*The Photographer* by Guibert ISBN 978-1596433755

*Sand + Bone* by Krul ISBN 978-1945293276

*Stitches* by Small ISBN 978-0393338966

*Tangles* by Leavitt ISBN 978-1616086398

*Temperance* by Malkasian ISBN 978-1606993231

Other readings are required throughout the semester but will be provided by Kirchoff via Canvas.

Please note that the material we cover in class may contain explicit violence, frank sex, alternative moral viewpoints, and graphic exploration of delicate or taboo subjects (e.g. race, racism, and sexual orientation). Like other cultural forms—such as literature or film—comic books address diverse topics, attitudes, ideological positions, and social problems. If the material depicted in the graphic novels make any individual uncomfortable, I encourage you to re-consider your enrollment in this class, as everyone will be expected to participate equally in the discussion of all assigned readings; additionally, you will be asked to talk about these issues in a respectful manner. Moreover, there are no alternative assignments. Questions? Please ask.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### *Graded Work*

Quizzes (13 total): 20% of Final Grade

Reading Responses and Discussion Questions (13 total): 25% of Final Grade

Book Review: 15% of Final Grade

Graphic Medicine Creation Project: 20% of Final Grade

Reflection on Creation Project: 20% of Final Grade

Note: Assignment sheets will be distributed for projects throughout the semester.

#### *Grading Scale*

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70-79 = C

60-69 = D

59 and below = F

A = A student has demonstrated thorough understanding and mastery (as can be reasonably expected of students at their current stage of educational development) of course content through participation, written work, presentations, and exams.

B = A student has demonstrated above average understanding of course material and is close to attaining mastery (again, as can be reasonably expected of students at their current stage of educational development) of course content; this is demonstrated through participation, written work, presentations, and exams.

C = A student has completed the minimum expectations of the course and has demonstrated an adequate understanding of course material, as demonstrated through participation, written work, presentations, and exams.

D = A student has not completed the minimum requirements of the course, struggling to demonstrate an understanding of course material. Participation, written work, presentations, and/or exams do not showcase the student's subject-knowledge.

F = A student has failed to complete the minimum-requirements. A student may have violated the attendance policy, failed to turn in work, refused to participate or not followed the class's code of ethics.

### **NOTE ABOUT RESOURCES AND TIME MANAGEMENT**

Please note that you have a bevy of resources at your disposal to help you with your work this semester. First and foremost, please know that I am here to help and answer questions. *If possible, utilizing my office hours to chat about course readings and course material is a great way to informally see how you're doing with the material.* Emailing questions about your work and how you are understanding it is *a perfectly acceptable alternative to visiting my office hours; I strongly encourage you to get in touch with me when you have questions or seek feedback.* Secondly, please be aware that the Writing Center is an excellent resource made available to all TAMUCT students; indeed, the Writing Center even offers online tutorials (contact Dr. Bruce Bowles at [bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu](mailto:bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu) to set these up). Whether you're struggling to come up with an idea, battling over how to wrap up your essay, or simply want an extra set of critical eyes to peruse your work, the Writing Center is there to help. I encourage each and every one of you to visit the Writing Center in person or online at least once during the semester.

Additionally, this class demands a lot of reading. Please budget your time accordingly. This class emphasizes weekly work; for the first thirteen weeks, you will usually be expected to complete a quiz on the reading, annotate/analyze a page from the graphic medicine text of the week, and write a reading response (again, details can be found on the appropriate assignment sheet in Canvas). Please budget your time accordingly so you do not need to rush through the graphic novels and the weekly work. As you will see, we read roughly one graphic novel a week. I acknowledge that everyone reads at different paces, but I would anticipate that most individuals will be able to read the graphic novel in three to five hours. However, only you know your pace of reading, so please budget your time accordingly.

My best advice would be to read the graphic novel early in the week; try to have the graphic novel read no later than Tuesday evening or Wednesday. Then, spend the latter part of the week taking the quiz, annotating a page, and writing a reading response. It might behoove you to do reading over the weekend as well.

In general, be very mindful of deadlines. Please do not wait until the last minute to (a) do course reading or (b) complete course writing. Studies have shown time and time again that the more time you allot yourself to complete projects, the more successful you will be.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

*Late Assignments* are not accepted unless prior arrangements have been made. This is a non-negotiable policy; however, if you have questions or are worried about completing an assignment on time, talk to me well before the due date and we can come up with a plan of action. Note: "well before the due date" does not mean 24 hours before the assignment is due. I generally like to hold these sorts of conferences a week ahead of the due date. If someone contacts me 24 hours before a project is due, my response may not be very favorable. This policy extends to daily/weekly work as well.

*Plagiarism* occurs when one person presents another person's words or ideas as her/his own; this can occur intentionally and unintentionally. An example of plagiarism might be a paper that does not have any in-text citations when outside research is being used or an essay that is missing a works cited page. Regardless of intentionality, it is a serious offense; should any plagiarism surface in any project, you will receive an F on that specific project. Should it happen again, it will result in an automatic F for the semester. Please see me if you have any questions concerning plagiarism.

*Email* is a great tool for communication. However, I ask that when you send me an email to use a proper salutation (e.g. Hi Dr. Kirchoff), complete sentences, and identifying information. This is a matter of common courtesy. As I mention above, I will make a good faith effort in responding to email queries within 24 hours.

## **ONLINE ETIQUETTE**

- All online conversation—in discussion board forums or otherwise—should be relevant to course material.
- Even though we are in an online environment, it is expected that you write in complete sentences, proof-read your posts, and practice good writing-habits.
- Respect for people's ideas, thoughts, and questions are paramount to your success in this class. My goal is for everyone to feel welcome and comfortable in this class, so please treat everyone in a courteous manner. This should be a friendly, positive environment open to discussion and feedback. Bear in mind that disrespect—towards peers or to the instructor—will not be tolerated in any form. Thus, ridiculing of ideas, derogatory language, name-calling, inflammatory comments, and intimidating behavior will not be allowed in any form. Posts that make use of such language will be taken down immediately, and could earn a 0 on that particular assignment.
- There is a difference between academic debate and ranting. Ranting can occur when (a) personal attacks against an author are made, (b) claims are being made about a work that are not substantiated, (c) no evidence is given to support ideas, or (d) an individual is being contrarian for the sake of being contrarian. While you are welcome to challenge ideas, please do so in a courteous manner that shows respect for the author(s) and in a manner that displays serious reflection about the subject matter.

## **PROGRAMMATIC ASSESSMENT**

To ensure the learning outcomes are met in the English Department, there is a program-wide

artifact collection process. To that end, some of the projects you complete for ENGL 4317 this semester may be used for programmatic assessment. Please note that all efforts will be made to keep your identity anonymous; as such, all identifying markers will be removed from your work if used for programmatic assessment. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Kirchoff.

## **COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR**

--Schedule is tentative and subject to change.

--Instruction(s) for quizzes, reading responses, and page annotations can be found on Canvas

### Week One (August 27 thru August 31)

- Mapping the Field of Graphic Medicine
- Readings:
  - Susan Squier et al. "Welcome to the Graphic Medicine Manifesto"
  - Ian Williams "Comics and the Iconography of Illness"
  - Linda S. Raphael and Maddon Rowell "How Should We Judge the Ethics of Illustrations in Graphic Medicine Novels?"
- Quiz
- Reading Response

### Week Two (September 3 thru September 7)

- Strategies for Reading Graphic Narrative
- Readings:
  - Selection from Mila Bongco's *Reading Comics*
  - "Glossary of Terms" (Handout)
  - Selection from Karin Kukkonen's *Studying Comics and Graphic Novels*
- Quiz
- Reading Response

### Week Three (September 10 thru September 14)

- Reading: *It's a Bird* by Seagle
- Quiz
- Reading Response
- Introduce Book Review Project

### Week Four (September 17 thru September 21)

- Reading: *Marbles* by Forney
- Quiz
- Reading Response

### Week Five (September 24 thru September 28)

- Reading: *Epileptic* by David B.
  - Note: This is a longer graphic novel, so be sure to leave yourself plenty of time to read this text

- Quiz
- Reading Response

Week Six (October 1 thru October 5)

- Reading: *Cancer Vixen* by Marchetto
- Quiz
- Reading Response

Week Seven (October 8 thru October 12)

- Reading: *Mom's Cancer* by Fies
- Quiz
- Reading Response

Week Eight (October 15 thru October 19)

- Reading: *Stitches* by Small
- Quiz
- Reading Response

Week Nine (October 22 thru October 26)

- Reading: *The Photographer* by Guibert and Lefèvre
- Quiz
- Reading Response

Week Ten (October 29 thru November 2)

- Reading: *Tangles* by Leavitt
- Quiz
- Reading Response
- Book Review Project Due
- Introduce Final Project

Week Eleven (November 5 thru November 9)

- Reading: *Temperance* by Malkasian
- Quiz
- Reading Response
- Tools for Crafting a Graphic Narrative

Week Twelve (November 12 thru November 16)

- Reading: *Sand + Bone* by Krul
- Quiz
- Reading Response
- Writing for Graphic Narrative

Week Thirteen (November 19 thru November 23; week of Thanksgiving)

- Reading: "These Memories Won't Last" by Sutu
- Reading Response

Week Fourteen (November 26 thru November 30)

- Individual Work Time

Week Fifteen (December 3 thru December 7)

- Workshop works in progress

Week Sixteen (December 10 thru December 14; final week of the semester)

- Graphic Narrative and Reflection due December 12<sup>th</sup> by 5:00 PM

### **COPYRIGHT NOTICE**

Students should assume that all course material is copyrighted by the respective author(s). Reproduction of course material is prohibited without consent by the author and/or course instructor. Violation of copyright is against the law and Texas A&M University-Central Texas' Code of Academic Honesty. All alleged violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

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### **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT**

- Students are encouraged to save work to multiple locations (e.g. computer hard-drive and thumb drive); papers lost due to technological issues will not be a sufficient excuse for failing to turn in work.

#### *Technology Support*

For technology issues, students should contact Help Desk Central.

Email: [helpdesk@tamu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamu.edu)

Phone: (254) 519-5466

[Web Chat](http://hdc.tamu.edu): <http://hdc.tamu.edu>

*When calling for support please let your support technician know you are a TAMUCT student.*

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

### **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES AND POLICIES**

#### *Drop Policy*

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must go to the Registrar's Office and complete a drop request form.

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the University Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled.

If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may

affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

### *Academic Integrity*

Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

### *Access & Inclusion*

At Texas A&M-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information please visit <http://www.tamuct.edu/departments/access-inclusion>.

### **TUTORING**

Tutoring is available to all TAMUCT students, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111.

If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Kim Wood at [k.wood@tamuct.edu](mailto:k.wood@tamuct.edu).

Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables TAMUCT students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over forty subject areas. To access Tutor.com, go to the 'My Courses' tab in Blackboard.

### *University Writing Center*

Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10am-5pm Monday-Thursday. Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available) or by making an appointment via WOnline at <https://tamuct.mywconline.com/>. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at [bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu](mailto:bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu) to schedule an online tutoring session. Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process.

While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is here to help!

If you have any questions about the University Writing Center, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at [bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu](mailto:bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu).

### **UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at TAMUCT are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the TAMUCT main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit <https://tamuct.libguides.com/>

