**ENGL 2303-002/DS 2301 Disabilities in Comics**

**Spring 2019**

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**Instructor:** Cathy Corder, Ph.D.

**Course Information:** TTh 8 – 9:20am, PKH 113

**Office/Appointments:** CH 210 / I am in my office from 8am – 5pm, Monday through Friday, with the exception of class times and departmental meetings. You may consider these “office hours,” when I am available to meet with you. My schedule does fill up around the time that registration is ongoing, so you may also schedule an appointment with me through the department’s advising scheduling system at [www.uta.edu/english/Academics/admissions.php](http://www.uta.edu/english/Academics/admissions.php).

**Email:** ccorder@uta.edu

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this class, we will read graphic literature in several different formats: comics, graphic novels and memoirs, and manga. We will examine these visual narratives as significant works of literature and learn to analyze them for plot development, characterization, style, and significant themes related to gender, ethnicity, and social and cultural values. We will also consider how the juxtaposition of text and image works to tell rich and vivid stories, as well as how these graphic narratives reveal elements of film making (wide, medium, and close-up shorts) and graphic design (color, black/white, panels, and gutters).

As we will discover, graphic literature provides a format for vivid narratives that involve characters with disabilities, who exist outside the boundaries of the normal human. These characters may be mutants, monstrous, alien, deformed—or they may be subtly or secretly different in mind and body. We will also study the use of disabled characters as stereotypes for social and moral disorder, the phenomenon of the “supercrip” comic hero, and the graphic disability memoir.

**Course Objectives under the Core Curriculum**

This course satisfies the University of Texas at Arlington core curriculum requirements in Language, Philosophy, and Culture.

* Students will develop their critical thinking by learning to read literary texts closely, pay attention to relevant details, and organize their observation into cogent arguments.
* Students will develop their communication skills by discussing literature orally in class and by articulating their findings in written arguments.
* Students will develop their sense and practice of personal responsibility by learning to engage with and incorporate secondary sources into their writing.
* Students will develop their understanding of social responsibility by tracing the way that literature shapes and addresses urgent social questions, both historical and contemporary; students will do this in class discussion and most pointedly in the Signature Assignment (see below).

**Course Goals**

* To encourage students to see that literacy studies matter and to foster enjoyment of literature
* To introduce students to a variety of literary terms and elements and to challenge them to demonstrate their understanding of visual literacy by identifying a variety of elements within graphic literature texts
* To help students recognize how historical, social, and cultural contexts shape the composition, reception, and interpretation of texts
* To allow students to demonstrate their ability to discuss literature using textual evidence to support assertions
* To instruct students in conducting research using the UTA Library resources and to use correct MLA documentations of primary and secondary sources

**Required Texts**

The following books are available at the UTA bookstore, and you can easily find used copies online:

* *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud
* *El Deafo*, Cece Bell and David Bell
* *Marbles: Mania, Depression, Michelangelo and Me – A Graphic Memoir*, Ellen Forney
* *Daredevil: The Man Without Fear*, Frank Miller and John Romita, Jr.
* *Stitches: A Memoir*, David Small
* *Full Metal Alchemist*, Vol. 1, Hiromu Arakawa
* *Annie Sullivan and the Trials of Helen Keller*, Joseph Lambert

Other required readings are available on Blackboard.

**DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

* ***Understanding Comics* Close Readings:** We will begin the semester with *Understanding Comics*, an important book that introduces many essential concepts about graphic literature. You will do 4 analytical, close readings of single pages from a comic book to demonstrate your understanding of those concepts. The portfolio will consist of four brief close readings.
* **Class Writing:** You will complete several short writing assignments in class. These will require critical reflection on course readings and discussions.
* **Exams:** These exams will consist of multiple-choice and essay questions, and will cover only those texts we have discussed since the previous exam. These will be completed in class.
* **UTA Signature Assignment**: A five-page essay. Please see information about the assignment below.

**Signature Assigment**

**Overview:** The signature assignment addresses all four of the course objectives. **Personal responsibility**: This essay includes the integration of outside sources; it, therefore, requires students to demonstrate personal responsibility as they use the words and ideas of other writers in an accurate and ethical manner. Citing sources properly isn’t just a matter of mechanics. It’s a question of personal responsibility (with real consequences for students) that overlaps with students’ responsibility to the academic community of which they are a part. The construction of a clearly articulated thesis statement supported by a careful analysis of textual evidence demonstrates **critical thinking** and **communication skills**. The development of a well-organized essay that demonstrates the correct use of grammar and other writing mechanics and demonstrates an awareness of the how to appeal convincingly to an audience further addresses the communication objective. The critical analysis of the way the selected text engages a significant issue of social responsibility addresses the **social responsibility** outcome.

**Specific Requirements**: Write a well-organized, effectively developed, **five-page** analysis of at least one of the course texts. The paper should critically analyze the way the text engages a significant issue of social responsibility. You should anchor the paper’s argument with a clearly articulated thesis statement and use careful analysis of textual evidence to support your claims.

**Possible Areas of Focus:** For this essay, you might examine how people with disabilities are presented in contemporary news and events, in popular media, or in novels and short stories, then look at how individuals with disabilities are portrayed in comics and graphic literature. You might also take a closer at the way in which comics merge disabilities and super heroes into a “super crip” characters. Another possibility is to look at graphic memoirs to consider how that format gives authors greater freedom in presenting their experiences with disabilities.

**Responsible Integration of Sources:** You must properly integrate material from two secondary sources into your analysis in a way that gives credit to the authors whose ideas and language you are incorporating. This is not a research paper or a summary of the work of literature, but a paper in which you draw on secondary sources to communicate an interpretive argument about your chosen text through the lens of social responsibility.

**Secondary Sources:** Use two secondary sources to describe the social issue you want to explore (persons with disabilities in society, depictions of persons with disabilities in popular culture, etc.). You may use additional materials to support your claim, demonstrate contemporary relevance, or provide historical context at your discretion. The only requirement is that you use two sources to set up and explain the issue you address in your interpretive argument.

Here is a list of credible sources:

* National newspapers (e.g., *The New York Times, The Washington Post, USA Today, Dallas Morning News, Fort Worth Star Telegram*)
* Print magazines (e.g., *The Atlantic, Harpers, New Yorker, Time*)
* Online magazines (e.g., *Slate, Salon*)
* Scholarly articles (e.g., academic articles published in peer-reviewed journals; you can find citations for these articles by using the MLA International Bibliography database, JSTOR, or Project Muse—all of which UTA’s library gives you access to online)
* Scholarly books or book chapters (it’s a good bet a book is scholarly if it’s published by an academic press, such as Duke University Press; if you’re not sure, ask me or a librarian)
* Historical documents (e.g., old newspaper articles, letters, speeches, journal entries) from academic databases (see the History subject guide on the library website for ideas)

If you are interested in using a source that isn’t listed here, please check with me.

**Minimum Requirements:** Your essay should be a Word document OR a .pdf file uploaded as an attached file in the appropriate place on Blackboard. The document should be double spaced, with 1-inch margins, in 12-pt., Times New Roman (or some other easily readable) font. Follow the MLA’s recommendations for formatting, citation, and style.

**Grading**

Each assignment is worth 100 points, and you will have a grading rubric to work with. Your final grade for this course will consist of the following:

*Understanding Comics* Portfolio (4) 10%

Class Writing 15%

Exam #1 15%

Exam #2 15%

Exam #3 15%

Signature Assignment Essay 30%

**Total 100%**

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

A 90% and above

B 80 – 89%

C 70 – 79%

D 60 – 69%

F 50% and below

**CLASS AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**Class Participation:** Class participation includes coming to class prepared, making thoughtful contributions in response to the readings, asking and answering questions, and presenting a general attitude of interest in the course content. **We will be examining visual materials, so you will need to be sure to have the physical book or have either a laptop or tablet available for class discussions**. I would prefer that you NOT use cell phones to access readings in class, since we will be paying close attention to detail, and you will miss those on a small screen.

I enourage you to make thoughtful contributions in response to the readings, to ask and answer questions, and to present a general attitude of interest in the course content. While I do not assign a specific grade percentage to participation, if you actively participate in class discussions, work hard, and maybe demonstrate some improvement in your writing and/or literary analysis, I do take that into account when there might be an opportunity to “round up” your final grade.

**Attendance.** You are expected to attend class regularly and to arrive on time.

At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students’ academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education does require that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients “begin attendance in a course.” UT Arlington insturctors must report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigned a student a grade of F, faculty must report the last date that a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

**My Attendance Policy:** As the instructor of record for this course, I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. You may take **four** unexcused absences, for whatever reason, and those will not affect your grade. However, if you miss more than **four** classes, I will deduct **five** points for each additional absence from your final grade point total.

* **Excused absences** include official university activities (such as athletics), military service, religious holidays, and/or the death of a close family member. You must inform me in writing at least one week in advance of an excused absence (except for a death, of course), and I will work with you to reschedule or make up missed work.
* **Unexcused absences** may be the result of any number of situations: bad traffic, previous class running late or in a building far away, you really need to study for that calculus test this afternoon, you really need to catch up on sleep this morning, you’re just not feeling well.
* **PLEASE** do not email me to say that you won’t be in class for WHATEVER unexcused reason. Do not email me and ask if you missed anything in class that day. Do not email me and ask how you can make up the work you missed. **I will not supply what you miss by email or phone. It is your responsibility to get together with a peer to get this material or make an appointment to see me in person.**
* I **will not** provide make-up opportunities for any work you missed due to an unexcused absence..

**Late Assignments.** I do not accept late assignments. If you must be absent, your work is still due on the assigned date.

**Classroom Behavior.** Class sessions are short and require your full attention. Bring books (print or digital) to every class. Students are expected to participate respectfully in class, to listen to other class members, and to comment appropriately. I also expect consideration and courtesy from students. Professors are to be addressed appropriately and communicated with professionally.

**Electronic Communication Policy:** You must have access to a computer with internet capabilities. You should check email **daily** for course information and updates. I will send group emails through Blackboard. I am happy to communicate with students through email. However, I ask that you be wise and professional in your use of this tool. Make sure you have consulted the syllabus for answers before you send me an email. Remember, I do not monitor my email 24 hours a day. I check it several times during the day, but not after 10pm or before 7am, and only occasionally on weekends. I will always try to respond to your email within 24 hours.

**Email Policy:** The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University “MavMail” address as the sole official means of communication with students. MavMail is used to remind students of important deadlines, advertise events and activities, and permit the University to conduct official transactions exclusively by electronic means. For example, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation are now sent to students through the MavMail system. All students are assigned a MavMail account. Students are responsible for checking their MavMail regularly. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/email/>. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, and it remains active even after they graduate from UT Arlington.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Conferences and Questions:** I am in my office from 8am – 5pm Monday through Friday, with the exception of class times and departmental meetings. You may consider these “office hours,” when I am available to meet with you. My schedule does fill up around the time that registration is ongoing, so you may also schedule an appointment with me through the department’s advising scheduling system at [www.uta.edu/english/Academics/admissions.php](http://www.uta.edu/english/Academics/admissions.php)

If you receive a grade on an assignment or quiz about which you have questions, please wait twenty-four hours before discussing it with me. This gives you time to process the assignment comments and to think about how your course work meets the requirements set forth for each assignment. I do not discuss individual student issues in the classroom before, during or after class.

**Academic Integrity**. All students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts" (Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2)

You can get in trouble for plagiarism by failing to correctly indicate places where you are making use of the work of another. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the conventions of citation by which you indicate which ideas are not your own and how your reader can find those sources. All students caught plagiarizing or cheating will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

**My Policy on Plagiarism: I have zero tolerance for plagiarism and will assign a grade of 0 to any assignment that has unattributed/uncited work.**

**Non-Discrimination Policy***: The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos****.***

**Title IX Policy***:* The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit* www.uta.edu/titleIX or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or jmhood@uta.edu.

**Campus Carry***:* Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, you should exit the room and move toward the nearest exits, and then move away from the building. When exiting the building during an emergency, you should never take an elevator, but use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist you in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will arrange to assist individuals with mobility concerns.

**STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**Disability Accommodations**. The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Library Research Help***.* The UT Arlington Library offers many ways for students to receive help with writing assignments: Students have access to research guides that assist students with required research. To access the guides, go to http://libguides.uta.edu. Search for the course number in the search box located at the top of the page. The research guides direct students to useful databases, as well as provide information about citation, developing a topic/thesis, and receiving help. Other helpful information may be found at links provided below:

Library Home Page .................................. http://www.uta.edu/library

Subject Guides ........................................ http://libguides.uta.edu

Subject Librarians .................................... http://www.uta.edu/library/help/subject-librarians.php

Database List ........................................... http://www.uta.edu/library/databases/index.php

Course Reserves ...................................... http://pulse.uta.edu/vwebv/enterCourseReserve.doc

Library Catalog ........................................ http://discover.uta.edu/

E-Journals ................................................ http://liblink.uta.edu/UTAlink/az

Library Tutorials ..................................... http://www.uta.edu/library/help/tutorials.php

Connecting from Off- Campus ................ http://libguides.uta.edu/offcampus

Ask A Librarian ........................................ <http://ask.uta.edu>

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center is located in Room 411 of the Central Library, with hours from 9 a.m. to 8:15 p.m. Mon-Th, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fri, and 12n to 5:15 p.m. Sat and Sun. You may register and make appointments online at [http://uta.mywconline.com](http://uta.mywconline.com/). Face-to-Face and online appointments for undergraduate students are scheduled for 40 minutes. Writing Center consultants assist with any aspect of academic writing, from understanding an assignment, brainstorming, revising an early draft, to polishing a final draft. However, the Writing Center is not an editing service; consultants will not correct grammar or rewrite assignments during our long sessions. I encourage each of you to use the Writing Center!

**WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME**

**You can expect me to:**

* **Give you feedback on all your written work within a week of its being turned in.**
* **Answer any follow-up questions you have about my feedback.**
* **Be available for telephone or online meetings, when requested.**
* **Answer your e-mails within 24 hours when I receive them during the week; I do not respond to e-mail on the weekend.**
* **Be transparent about my rationale for the policies in this course; that is to say, feel free to ask me why I made a particular decision, and I’d be happy to explain my thinking to you.**
* **Be open to constructive feedback.**

**Syllabus and Schedule Changes:** I try to make my syllabus as complete as possible; however, during the course of the semester I may be required to alter, add, or abandon certain policies /assignments. Instructors reserve the right to make such changes as they become necessary. I will inform students of any changes through email.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

T 1/15 Introductions

Th 1/17 *Understanding Comics*, Chaps 2 and 3: Comics Vocabulary and Reading Comics

T 1/22 *Understanding Comics*, Chaps 4 and 5: Time and Motion

  **Close Reading #1 due**

Th 1/24 *Understanding Comics*, Chaps 6 and 7: Words/Images and the Creative Process

  **Close Reading #2 due**

T 1/29 *Understanding Comics*, Chaps 8 and 9: Color and the Future of Comics

  **Close Reading #3 due**

Th 1/31 *X-Men* – Available on Blackboard

  **Close Reading #4 due**

T 2/5 *Daredevil*, pp. 1-47

Th 2/7 *Daredevil*, pp. 48-101

 **Class Writing #1**

T 2/12 *Daredevil*, pp. 102-44

Th 2/14 *Daredevil*, pp. 145-end

T 2/19 *Full Metal Alchemist*, pp. 1-57

Th 2/21 *Full Metal Alchemist*, pp. 58-99

 **Class Writing #2**

T 2/26 *Full Metal Alchemist*, pp. 100-40

Th 2/28 *Full Metal Alchemist*, pp. 141-end

T 3/5 **Exam #1**

Th 3/7 *Helen Killer* – Available on Blackboard

T 3/12 Spring Break

Th 3/14 Spring Break

T 3/19 *El Deafo*, pp. 1-71

Th 3/21 *El Deafo*, pp. 72-149

 **Class Writing #3**

T 3/26 *El Deafo*, pp. 150-end

Th 3/28 *Annie Sullivan and the Trials of Helen Keller* – Read all

 F 3/29 Last day to drop a class

T 4/2 **Exam #2**

Th 4/4 *Marbles*, pp. 1-60

T 4/9 *Marbles*, pp. 61-113

 **Class Writing #4**

Th 4/11 *Marbles*, pp. 117-78

T 4/16 *Marbles*, pp. 181-end

Th 4/18 *Stitches*, pp. 1-76

T 4/23 *Stitches*, pp. 77-156

 **Class Writing #5**

Th 4/25 *Stitches*, pp. 157-242

T 4/30 *Stitches*, pp. 243-end

Th 5/2 **Exam #3**

T 5/7 **Signature Assignment due by 5pm**