

**SPAN 4313-001: La Historieta Mexicana/Mexican Comics**

Spring 2015

TR 9:30-10:50am

TH 202

Dr. Christopher Conway

Open Office Hours: UT Arlington Library.

Alternate Office Hours: Modern Languages Chair's Office (Hammond Hall, Floor 2)

Email: conway@uta.edu

Phone: Modern Languages Department Main Office 817-272-3161

Office Hours: Thursday 11-12 & Friday 12-1 (UTA Library 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor) and by appointment (Hammond Hall Chair's Office.)

**\*This syllabus is in English for administrative purposes. This internet course will be held in Spanish.**

**\*\*Please use the course homepage as your primary syllabus.**

**Course Description:** In this special topics course, we use Mexican comic books as a tool for learning more about Mexican culture and history, as well as exercising our critical thinking and writing skills in Spanish. Some of the course themes to be covered include the relationship between Mexican comics and other media, such as films and radio; comparisons between U.S. and Mexican popular culture; the intersection of gender, race, and class in popular Mexican comics; and comics and the Latino population of North Texas.

**Required Book:** *Understanding Comics* by Scott McCloud (UT Arlington Bookstore). Other readings on reserve.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students demonstrate a strong grasp of advanced written expression in the Spanish language.
2. Students acquire specialized vocabulary in English and Spanish to talk about comic books in the Mexican context.
3. Students exercise critical thinking skills by analyzing the historical and sociological content of comics, both at the formalist level (panel by panel), and at the general, thematic level (the message of an overall story or comic book). This is accomplished through Spanish language essays and guided questions, as well as by classroom discussions, poster presentations and original research.
4. Students exercise specialized research skills through the use of the UTA library database system, to examine the intersection of comic books and literacy, and their potential impact upon public libraries.

5. Students apply their knowledge of major comic book characters and trends to make a case for what comic books should be made available to the Latino community of North Texas through the Arlington Public Library.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Grade Policy/Requirements:**

Citation Check=5% of Final Grade. Due 2/3 in class.

Blog Reflections (6) x 2%=12% of Final Grade. All are due by 9:30 AM on the due dates that follow: 1/27; 2/5; 2/24; 3/19; 4/7 & 4/14.

Essay (2) x 14%=28% of Final Grade. 2/17 & 3/31, due in class.

Midterm=25% of Final Grade. 3/3 in class

Project=15% of Final Grade. 5/5 in class.

Final=15% of Final Grade. May 14, 8-10:30 AM in class.

### **Descriptions of major assignments and examinations with due dates:**

**Citation Check:** It is important for students to learn how to properly participate in a scholarly conversation. For this assignment, outlined in Blackboard in more detail, students study an online module and take an online quiz to measure their understanding of how to properly cite the work of others. Students bring their passing test result to class and submit it to me as evidence of the completion of this assignment. Citation Check=5% of Final Grade. Due 2/3 in class.

**Blog Reflections:** Before we had blogs, we used to call this assignment “journaling.” For this assignment, students write 6 critical reflections in Spanish or English on a particular topic in order to develop their ideas and knowledge before coming to class. These reflections will be posted on their blog, which I will visit frequently and respond to as a commenter. The benefit of this online journaling assessment is to sustain critical thinking, allow me to get to know every student better, to permit students to see each other’s work and interact more, and empower students to be creative in the presentation of their ideas by including illustrations. Blogs will be evaluated more lightly than essays, but both quality of Spanish or English and substance of content will count. Length will also count (each blog needs to be at least 400 words in order to receive a passing grade). I will provide students with instructions for each blog in advance. Blog Reflections (6) x 2%=12% of Final Grade. All are due by 9:30 AM on the due dates that follow: 1/27; 2/5; 2/24; 3/19; 4/7 & 4/14.

**Essays:** Students will write two essays in Spanish that demonstrate critical thinking, good organization, strong spelling and grammar, and an understanding of course objectives and conversations. Students will be graded on all of these items. Instructions and themes will be provided on Blackboard. Essay (2) x 14%=28% of Final Grade. 2/17 & 3/31, due in class.

**Midterm and Final:** Students who take good notes in their notebook will be rewarded by the experience of taking exams that are “open notebook.” Learning is not about memorizing for an exam. It’s about keeping track of information, translating into our own words and concepts, and then applying it to new contexts. By learning through note-taking, each student will be assured a much easier time during the exams, which will be composed of short answers and essay questions. Midterm=25% of Final Grade. 3/3 in class. Final=15% of Final Grade. May 14, 8-10:30 AM in class.

**Service Learning Project:** The Arlington Public Library has expressed interest in receiving research from our class in order to build up their collection of Spanish language comic books. In our class, we will work together in groups, to develop original research and guidance for the APL. In this way, our class can contribute to the wider Arlington community and promote Spanish language literacy among young people and adults, regardless of their background. Project=15% of Final Grade. 5/5 in class.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** Students will have the opportunity to opt out of the final, or receive a very large curve on the final exam by meeting acquiring certain professional development experiences. See “Extra Credit” handout to be passed out in class and shared electronically.

**Attendance Policy:** 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. As the instructor of this section, my policy is as follows:

- Attendance is expected and not rewarded with a % of the final grade. Instead, my policy is to penalize absenteeism by deducting points from the final grade as follows:
- You are free to miss 1 ½ weeks of class (4 hours or 3 class absences) with no questions asked and no penalty. This is for medical emergencies, family emergencies, for anything real or unreal that keeps you from coming to class. Your free absence applies to major life stuff.
- 4 absences will result in a 7 point deduction from your final grade. This is to make it more difficult for you to get an A in the class when you miss over a week of class.
- 5 absences will result in a 15 point deduction from your final grade. This is to ensure you do not get an A in the class for missing nearly two weeks of class.

- Excused absences for absences 4 may be discussed with me if proper documentation is provided. In the event that I excuse a student for absence 4, that student will receive no point penalty. If a student misses over 2 weeks of class (4 class meetings), then even if he or she has an excused absence or two, he or she will receive a 10 point deduction upon the 5<sup>th</sup> absence. You cannot miss more than 2 weeks of class and expect no penalty unless you have strong documentation and my consent to excuse you from at least 3 class sessions.

**Make-Up Policy:** Students are permitted to make up one missed homework and one missed quiz in Week 13, on the condition that (1) They have participated regularly in class and shown me that they are engaged and generally prepared; (2) Have a B average in the class; and (3) No more than 3 absences by week 13.

**Tardy work Policy:** Students are penalized for late work as follows: No paper that is late can get an "A," regardless of the quality of its work. Papers that don't meet the original deadline and are less than a day late will not receive a grade higher than an 85. Papers that are more than one day late will not be accepted. See make-up policy above.

## **IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**Expectations for Out-of-Class Study:** Beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional 5 hours per week of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing for exams, etc.

**Grade Grievances:** Any appeal of a grade in this course must follow the procedures and deadlines for grade-related grievances as published in the current University Catalog.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** 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.

**Title IX:** The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law “Title IX” such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses 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.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online 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>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** I will discuss this matter with you on the first day of class and review it during the second week of class. In the case of an emergency, walk in a calm fashion out of our classroom and head straight down the hallway toward the exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**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](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

## **SCHEDULE OF READINGS**

*As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. –Christopher Conway.*

### **WEEK 1: JAN 20 & JAN22**

Tuesday 1/20: First Encounter. Introduction to the class and to one Mexican comic.

Thursday 1/22: One Mexican Comic. Homework Reading Due Today (always take good notes on paper to bring to class, your midterm is open notebook, without notes you will struggle with midterm): “Mexican comic handout.” Other Homework Tasks: Set up your blog. **Written Homework Due by 9:30 AM: Bring a sheet of paper with your blog address written on it and turn it in to the professor in class.** To set up your blog, see instructions on Blackboard.

## **WEEK 2: JAN 27 & JAN 29**

Tuesday 1/27: Developing a Critical Vocabulary: Scott McCloud’s Understanding Comics. Homework Reading Due Today: McCloud, Chapters 1 & 2. **Written Homework Due Today by 9:30 AM: Blog 1 (see Blog 1 theme on Blackboard.)**

Thursday 1/29: Class Will Not Meet. Homework Reading Due Today: McCloud, Chapter 3. **No Written Homework Due.** Other Homework Assignment: Watch multimedia presentation “Apuntes sobre Scott McCloud.”

## **WEEK 3: FEB 3 & FEB 5**

Tuesday 2/3: Homework Reading: McCloud Chapters 4 & 5. **Written Homework Due Today: Turn in Working with Scholarly Resources receipt in class.** You must have a passing score on the sheet.

Thursday 2/5: Homework Reading Due Today: McCloud, Chapter 7. **Written Homework Due by 9:30 AM: Blog 2 (See Blog 2 theme on Blackboard.)**

## **Week 4: FEB 10 & FEB 12**

Tuesday 2/10: Applying Scott McCloud. Homework Reading: Review Mexican comic books you purchased from Fiesta and prepare notes on how to use McCloud to analyze them. **No Written Homework Due.**

Thursday 2/12: Homework Reading: Review Mexican comic books you purchased from Fiesta and prepare notes on how to use McCloud to analyze them. **No Written Homework Due.**

## **Week 5: FEB 17 & FEB 19**

Tuesday 2/17: Mexican Love Stories. Class Will Not Meet. Homework Reading: None. **Written Homework Due Today: Ensayo 1.** Online Hybrid Component: Watch the documentary “El cine mexicano: las grandes décadas” on YouTube.

Thursday 2/19: Homework Reading: “Golden Age, Crisis, and Retrenchment: 1947-1959,” from *Mexican Cinema: Reflections of a Society* by Carl Mora. Other Homework Task: Watch First 90 minutes of *Nosotros los Pobres* on Hulu or YouTube (I recommend Hulu

for slightly better quality.) We will watch the end of the movie in class. **No Written Homework Due.**

### **Week 6: Feb 24 & Feb 26**

Tuesday 2/24: Reading: “El consumo de historietas sentimentales” by María Elena Hernández Ramírez. “El inicio de la historieta femenina en Mexico” (lectura en WWW). **Written Homework: Blog 3.** Additional readings (recommended, not required): “La silueta del vacío: imágenes filmicas de la familia mexicana en los años cuarenta de Julia Tuñón; and “La representación de la pobreza en el cine clásico mexicano” by the same author.

Thursday 2/26: Reading Homework: “The incorporation of women: A Comparison of North American and Mexican Popular Narrative” by Jean Franco. **No Written Homework Due.**

### **Week 7: March 3 & March 5**

Tuesday 3/3: **Open Notebook Midterm Examination. No laptops/tablets permitted.**

Thursday 3/5: Mexiwesterns! Reading Homework: “El libro vaquero: clásico de la cultura popular” by Raúl López Parra.

### **SPRING BREAK**

### **WEEK 8: March 17 & March 19**

Tuesday 3/17: Movie in Class. (a Mexiwestern). No Reading Homework Due. **No Written Homework Due.**

Thursday 3/19 Movie in Class. Reading Homework: Selections from The Six-Gun Mystique by John G. Cawelti. **Written Homework Due: Blog 4.**

### **WEEK 9: March 24 & March 26**

Tuesday 3/24: Reading Homework: “Lost in the Blue Eyes of the North” by Bruce Campbell, from Viva la Historieta! **No Written Homework Due.**

Thursday 3/26: Reading Homework: “Lost in the Blue Eyes of the North” by Bruce Campbell. **No Written Homework Due.**

### **WEEK 10: March 31 & April 2**

Tuesday 3/31: **Written Homework Due: Essay 2.** No Reading Homework.

Thursday 4/2: The Memín Pinguín Controversy. Reading Homework: Memín Pinguín 1-

3. **No Written Homework Due.** [Last day to drop classes is tomorrow 4/3.]

**WEEK 11: April 7 & April 9**

Tuesday 4/7: Reading Homework: Memín Pinguín 4-5 & Selected News Articles on Memín Pinguín (WWW). **Written Homework Due: Blog 5.**

Thursday 4/9: Reading Homework: “Putting a Stamp on Racism” by Kirstie Dorr. **No Written Homework Due.**

**WEEK 12: April 14 and April 16**

Tuesday 4/14: Superheroes. Reading Homework: TBA. **Written Homework Due: Blog 6.**

Thursday 4/16: Reading Homework: TBA. **No Written Homework Due.**

**WEEKS 13-15: April 21, 23; April 28, 30; May 5, 7.**

Tuesday 4/21: Project Development. **No Written Homework Due.**

Thursday 4/23: Class meets in Library for Cultural Constructions Conference. **No Written Homework Due.**

Tuesday 4/28: Group work in class. **Written Homework Due: Project Status Report (one report per group.)**

Thursday 4/30: Group work in class. **No Written Homework Due.**

Tuesday 5/5: **Written Work Due: Research Project.**

Thursday 5/7: Review for Final.

**Final Exam: Thursday May 14, 8-10:30 AM.**

**Emergency Phone Numbers:** In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at 817-272-3003 (non-campus phone), 2-3003 (campus