

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**
www.mlcs.ualberta.ca

2015-2016 MLCS 199 A1: Special Topics:
Superheroes in Comics and Beyond
(Fall Term)

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Time: MWF 13:00-13:50
Place: Bus 1-5
Office Hours: Tuesday from 9am to 3pm,
or by appointment
Course Website: under construction

Course Prerequisite: None

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed, no such projects approved.

Community Service Learning component

Required Optional None

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

- Exam registry – Students' Union
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)

Yes No

Course Description and Objectives:

In this course we will first study comics mainly through the superhero genre and its critique through new versions of superheroes (*Batman Returns*, *Watchmen*, ...). Superheroes have been around with us for a long time. From Hercules to Achilles to Zorro to Superman and Wonder Woman, they entertain us yet they also move us and serve as strong models or counter-models. The persistence of their “myth” shows how meaningful they are.

In the first part of this course, after briefly studying the roots of superheroes in mythology, we will historicize the surrounding context/s of the traditional superhero figures like Superman, Batman, Wonder woman and Spiderman, whether it is social,

political or historical (WWII, the 60s, the 80s, the 2000s) through diverse Cultural Studies readings. In the second part of the course, we will cover some new comics models, such as the long-time ignored or marginalized heroes like Superheroines, more diverse ethnicities and non-American superheroes. For this second part, students in agreement with the instructor will choose and present one non-traditional hero from superheroines to various subcultures (gay, ...) and “national” cultures (Japanese, Latin American, Chinese, Islamic cultures, ...).

Goals

Understand the value and the connection between mythology & history

Discuss issues in small groups

Practice individual oral presentations

Write short essays on some social issues

Textbooks

	Author	Title	Publisher/Year
1	Hatfield, Charles	<i>The Superhero Reader</i>	UP Mississippi, 2013
2	Multiple	<i>Batman: Celebration 75 years</i>	DC 2014
3	Chabon, Michael	<i>Kavalier & Clay</i>	Random, 2012
4	Moore, Alan & Alii	<i>Watchmen</i>	DC, 2013
5	Moulton Marston & Alii	<i>Wonder woman</i>	IDW 2014
6	Willow Wilson & Alii	<i>Kamala Khan, Vol.1-No Normal</i>	Marvel, 2014
7	Belke, David	<i>Next Year's Men of Steel</i>	Samuel French, 2012
8	Otomo Katsuhiro	<i>Akira, Vol. 1</i>	Kodansha Comics, 2009
9	Gosciny & Uderzo	<i>Astérix, Vol. 4 (with “The Olympic Games”)</i>	Orion, 2012
10	Multiple	<i>Alpha Flight, Vol. 1</i>	Marvel, 2012
11	O'Malley, Scott	<i>Scott Pilgrim, Vol.1</i>	Oni Press, 2012

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

		%
Participation	Questions & answers from Instructors & students	15
Presentation (Date: TBD in class, end of 1 st week)	One: short, clear, interesting	5
Quizzes	8-10 on basic understanding of textbooks	20
Midterm (Oct. 19th)	All texts & issues seen in first part of the course in class	15
Final (Dec. 17 th)	All texts & presentations seen in class	30
Final options (Due date: December 11 th) see explanatory note below	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Traditional essay 2. Creative (comics, ...) 3. CSL 	15

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable):

Recommended; please consult the following site:

[http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Regulations-and-Information/Academic-Regulation/23.5.html#23.5.6\(3\)](http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Regulations-and-Information/Academic-Regulation/23.5.html#23.5.6(3))

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Descriptions for assignments and final projects will be made available the first day of class by a handout.

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University calendar.”

Academic Integrity:

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment safe and free of discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels this policy has been or is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that directs discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the student ombudservice (<http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/>).

Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at

<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110> .

Academic Honesty:

All students should consult the information provided by the Office of Judicial Affairs regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook and Information for Students). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

Students involved in language courses and **translation** courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.”

Students in languages courses should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the Academic Discipline Process .

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.3(1) and 23.5.6 of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

In this course, participation counts for 15% of the total grade. Attendance is required for every class and attendance will be taken for every class. Above 2 un-excusable absences, participation grade will go down one letter for each absence, from A to B to C to D to F. Participation means questions and answers to and from other students and instructors. There will be no make-up quiz/test/exam. Missed grades will be calculated based on ALL the previous grades (participation, quizzes, midterm, oral presentations).

Policy for Late Assignments:

The students who consult **in advance** with the instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension only one time throughout the course with no penalty. However, if a second excuse is to be granted for late assignments, half of the mark assigned for this particular work will be deducted. Otherwise, all assignments should be handed in on the deadline as stated in class. Any assignment not handed-in in time or unexcused late assignments will be given a F. Late excuses will **not** be accepted for any reason.

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Specialized Support & Disability Services, contact their office immediately (2-800 SUB; Email sasrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB www.ssds.ualberta.ca).

Grading:

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below (“**MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale**”). The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Letter	%	Pts	Descriptor
A+	95-100%	4.0	Outstanding: Superior performance showing understanding and knowledge of the subject matter far exceeding expectations.
A	90-94%	4.0	Excellent: Superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
A-	86-89%	3.7	Very good: Clearly above average performance with complete knowledge of subject matter.
B+	82-85%	3.3	Very good
B	75-81%	3.0	Good: average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.
B-	70-74%	2.7	Good
C+	66-69%	2.3	Satisfactory: Basic understanding of the subject matter
C	61-65%	2.0	Satisfactory
C-	58-60%	1.7	Satisfactory
D+	55-57%	1.3	Minimal Pass: Marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.
D	50-54%	1.0	Minimal Pass: Marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.
F	0-49%	0.0	Fail: Unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.