GSWS 321-4: ST: GRAPHIC SEX: GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN COMICS (REMOTE)

Professor: Dr. Coleman Nye
Email: anye@sfu.ca
Office Hours: Tuesdays 16:00 – 17:00 on Zoom, by appointment

SYNCHRONOUS and/or ASYNCHRONOUS CLASS SCHEDULING
- Lecture materials will be recorded and available on canvas.
- Weekly lecture, discussion, and drawing activities will take place online and will include asynchronous and synchronous components. Attendance at synchronous online components (via BB Collaborate and/or Zoom) on Tuesdays from 14:00-16:00 is encouraged, but not required. Recordings of these sessions will be made available on canvas.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
From the newspaper funny pages to the graphic novel Fun Home, comics are a pervasive and popular art form read by audiences of all ages. The unique combination of text and image in comics provides a rich visual language for exploring the lived complexities of embodied experience and the larger social and political contexts that shape our identities. What might we learn about how social norms are produced and transformed through the stories portrayed in Marvel superhero comics, from the disability politics of the Hawkeye to the gender politics of Miss Marvel? How do the stark lines and sharp visual contrasts in Marjane Satrapi’s graphic memoir Persepolis add another dimension to her story about gender and religion in the context of the Iranian Revolution? And how might putting our own experiences into graphic form help us to think in more nuanced and unexpected ways about how formations of gender and sexuality are at play in our own lives? This course is designed to teach students how to read and interpret comics, how to analyze and theorize the play of gender and sexuality in graphic narratives – from superhero comics and manga to underground comix and graphic memoirs – and how to visually think, theorize, and communicate by creating our own drawings.

*Please be advised: While this course requires you to draw A LOT, it requires – and even encourages! – absolutely no prior artistic training, skill, or experience. The premise of the course is everyone can draw and there is no such thing as a bad drawing. Cartoonist Lynda Barry reminds us: judging our drawings gets in the way of seeing the original, unexpected, and exciting ideas that are really there. So, let’s start drawing and see what shows up!

EDUCATIONAL GOALS:
For more detailed information please see the GSWS website:
http://www.sfu.ca/gsws/undergraduate/courses/Educational_Goals.html

PREREQUISITE: 15 units

THE DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND WOMEN’S STUDIES ENCOURAGES CLARITY OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION AND GOOD WRITING. STUDENTS WILL BE EVALUATED ON THESE SKILLS IN ALL COURSES GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT. IN ADDITION, THE DEPARTMENT WILL FOLLOW POLICY T10.02 WITH RESPECT TO “INTELLECTUAL HONESTY,” AND “ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE” (WWW.SFU.CA/POLICIES/TEACHING)
COURSE READINGS:
• Sherine Hamdy and Coleman Nye, Lissa: A Story of Friendship, Medical Promise, and Revolution (2017, University of Toronto Press), e-book $15.96 at University of Toronto Press website
• Thi Bui, The Best We Could Do (2017, Abrams), e-book $19 at Indigo
• Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, Sonny Assu, et al. This Place: 150 Years Retold (2019, Portage and Main), e-book $23 at Indigo
• All other readings and course materials will be made available on canvas

*I encourage you to purchase e-books from sellers that aren’t Amazon. If you want a paperback, Pulp Fiction Books is a great local bookstore that will order anything Amazon has at a comparable price and offers free shipping. They are also doing free delivery in Vancouver.

COURSE EVALUATION AND ASSIGNMENTS:
All assignments in this class will be hand-drawn. The course requires no prior artistic training, skill, or experience. All assignments will be evaluated based on the quality of effort, thought, and progress, not on the technical quality of the art.
• Weekly low-stakes drawing exercises (6 points each x 9) – 54%
• Drawing Assignment #1 (Comic Strip) – 10%
• Drawing Assignment #2 (2-Page Graphic Story) – 16%
• Drawing Assignment #3 (4-page Zine, Graphic Narrative, or Comic) – 20%

NOTES:
Required Supplies:
• Composition Notebook (wide-rule, standard size, non-recycled paper)
• Papermate Flair Pens (black, medium point)
• Colored markers or crayons
• Index Cards (4”x 6” index cards, blank on one side)
• Blank Printer Paper (8.5” x 11”)

*If you are unable to access or afford drawing supplies, please contact the professor. I do not want cost of supplies to inhibit any student’s ability to take the course.