**The Graphic Novel**

**Mr. Harris – B359**

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*“If Shakespeare and Michelangelo were alive today, and if they decided to collaborate on a comic, Shakespeare would write the script and Michelangelo would draw it. How could anybody say that this wouldn’t be as worthwhile an artform as anything on earth?”*

*- Stan Lee, creator of Spider-Man, X-Men, the Incredible Hulk, etc.*

Welcome, True Believers! In the Graphic Novel, students will explore the medium of graphic narrative. The combination of the written word along with images opens up new and interesting possibilities in storytelling and meaning. This course is not just a simple, superficial reading of the texts, but a deep analysis of the choices each author has made both in narrative and image.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of this course, students will be able to

* identify and understand the conventions of a graphic novel
* analyze the relationship between content and form
* interpret pictures to prompt rich discussion, stimulate problem solving and build social meaning
* connect graphic novels to students’ own experiences, personal lives and other stories or media
* expand students’ knowledge of the world and society both past and present
* develop students’ skills in different modes of writing – narrative, informative, argumentative
* reflect on students’ own abilities as both reader and writer

**Student Responsibilities**

Although this course is an elective, it is still a high school course and needs to be taken seriously. That means, all students should come prepared to class with a pen or pencil and notebook. **Do not ask me for a pen or pencil.** This course runs primarily as a discussion. Since you are upperclassmen, I expect you to treat each other with respect. Listen to everyone’s opinions and thoughts attentively and be ready to express your own as well. Everyone is welcomed and encouraged to give their opinions. If there is a student or group of students who cannot follow this simple rule, they will not be able to participate in this course.

**Classroom Policies**

**Attendance:** Absences mean that you will miss out on important material, and it will be very easy to find yourself falling behind. Regular classroom attendance is therefore expected. **In the event that you are absent, I expect to find out what you have missed as soon as possible**. The best ways to do this is to ask a fellow classmate or refer to my website. Please do not ask me at the beginning, middle or end of class. You should plan on checking with me after school to make sure you have not missed anything. To make up the day, make an appointment in the appointment book. Remember, **10 school days. You must remember; NOT ME!**

**Tardiness:** Being late to class is simply unacceptable. Please be on time for every class.

**Conduct:** Students are expected to follow all the rules listed in the Student Handbook. That means no cell phones, food, etc… in my classroom. Please don’t try to be clever; I’ve seen it all.

**Plagiarism:** Although there is very little out there written on graphic novels, plagiarism is simply unacceptable. Plagiarism is any attempt to pass off someone else’s work as your own. **Any** student involved in plagiarism will receive a **ZERO** on the assignment and a phone call will be made to that student’s guardians explaining what has happened. Furthermore, all cases of plagiarism are referred to the Dean’s office for possible additional consequences. Allowing your homework/quiz/test/paper/etc… to be copied makes you just as guilty as the person doing the copying! Finally, **ignorance** is not an acceptable excuse. If I find it, you did it. End of story.

**Deadlines:** For the most part, deadlines are firm. If there is any time you need an extension, please ask me ahead of time. **The night before does not count as ahead of time.**

**Google:** Most of the work submitted in Graphic Novel is done via Google Docs. All students must create a GMAIL account in order to use this system. Please see my website for details on how to do this.

**Grading Breakdown and Description**

70% Writing Assignment, Discussion Questions and Reading Check Quizzes

20% Quarterly Project

10% Attendance and Participation

**Syllabus**

The following is an outline of the different units and the texts we will be covering during the Graphic Novel. All of this is subject to change.

**Comics as Medium, not Genre**

* Scott McCloud’s *Understanding Comics*
* Gene Leun Yang’s *American Born Chinese*

**Graphic Novel as Memoir**

* Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis*
* Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*

**The Meaning behind Superheroes in Graphic Novels**

* Frank Miller’s *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*
	+ Christopher Nolan’s *Batman Begins* (if time)
* Alan Moore’s *V for Vendetta*
	+ James McTeigue’s *V for Vendetta* (it time)

**Filming Graphic Novels (If time)**

* *TBD*