This course introduces you to the demands of college-level inquiry. Through reading, writing, discussing, researching, and analyzing, we will consider whether, why, and in what ways comics should be taken seriously. Are they art? Are they cultural and political commentary? Are they a business?

**Required Books**

Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics*

Roger Sabin, *Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels*

Michael Chabon, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*

Plus one of the following:

- Chester Brown, *Louis Reil*
- Max Allan Collins, *Road to Perdition*
- Frank Miller, *Sin City: The Big Fat Kill*
- Keiji Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen: A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima*
- Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*
- Art Spiegelman, *Maus*, vol 1
- Craig Thompson, *Blankets*

**Required Work and Grading**

- Inquiry Journal: 30%
- Graphic Novel Project: 30%
- Inquiry Project: 40%

In your Inquiry Journal you will do all your daily assignments, in-class work, and notes and preparatory analyses for your projects. Buy a bound notebook (one that the pages won't come out of) and write all your work in this notebook. I will look at your journals regularly and collect them at the end of the course.

For your Graphic Novel Project, you will read and analyze one of the graphic novels listed above and prepare a poster presentation for the class. Presentations will take place in the seventh week of the semester.
For your Inquiry Project, you will answer some question about comics, using two different modes of presentation — an 8-page paper and an extended comic strip — and you will write an additional 3-page paper in which you discuss the differences between the two presentations of your ideas. The 8-page paper will be due November 18, and the comic strip and 3-page paper will be due December 9.

Attendance and Due Dates
You are most likely to achieve the goals of this course (and complete it with a good grade) if you attend all classes and turn in your work on time. Daily assignments prepare you for the work we will do in class, and they must be completed before you come to class in order to be useful to you.

Note: Please always bring your class books and inquiry journals to class with you.

ADA Policy
In accordance with university policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act, academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as the instructor is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact the Office of Affirmative Programs (487-3310) if you have questions about issues related to the ADA.

First Week Assignments

August 31  Read McCloud, introduction and Chapter One

In your inquiry journal write what you think about McCloud's definition of comics. What kinds of things does he not consider comics? What are his reasons? Do you agree with him or not? Can you think of exceptions to his definition — things that should be considered comics but don't fit his definition exactly? Why do you think they should be included? Do you think that all of the examples he included in his history of comics should be considered comics? Why or why not?

September 2  Read Sabin, introduction and Chapter One

In your inquiry journal explain what Sabin means when he says comics are not 'Art,' but they are an artform. Though he says that comics escape critical analysis (they aren't often reviewed by critics), he does see them as making comments about cultural and social values. What comments do the early comics he discusses make? Do current comics make similar kinds of comments? Also compare Sabin's history of comics to McCloud's: does Sabin include comics that wouldn't fit McCloud's definition?