City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus

offered by Department of English
with effect from Semester A 2024/25

Part I   **Course Overview**

Course Title:	**The Graphic Novel**
Course Code:	**EN6520**
Course Duration:	**One Semester**
Credit Units:	**3 credits**
Level:	**P6**
Medium of Instruction:	**English**
Medium of Assessment:	**English**
Prerequisites: *(Course Code and Title)*	**None**
Precursors: *(Course Code and Title)*	**None**
Equivalent Courses: *(Course Code and Title)*	**None**
Exclusive Courses: *(Course Code and Title)*	**None**

Part II   Course Details

1.   **Abstract**

This course will focus on the graphic novel as a literary form. As students discuss influential contemporary graphic novels, they will consider how these visual/verbal texts can be interpreted from different theoretical points of view. Along with critical interpretation, students will also become familiar with the language of comics and develop a sense of how graphic narratives communicate meaning on different levels. The main assessment tasks include analysis essay responses and a group project, that latter of which will involve students working collaboratively to create their own graphic narrative. Throughout the course students will also be given the opportunity to weigh the pedagogical benefits of using graphic narratives in the classroom.

2.   **Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)**
(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	*A2*	*A3*
1.	Identify key, texts, concepts related to comics and graphic novels.		v	v	
2.	Examine the aesthetic and creative aspects of graphic narratives by exploring themes and styles of diverse texts		v	v	
3.	Apply critical reading, thinking, and writing skills in interpreting visual/verbal texts		v	v	v
4.	Discuss the characteristics of graphic narratives and understand their interdisciplinary possibilities		v	v	v
5.	Generate relevant creative responses in relation to comics and graphic novels		v	v	v
		100%			

A1:   Attitude
Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.
A2:   Ability
Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.
A3:   *Accomplishments*
Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. **Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)**
   (LTAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

LTA	Brief Description	CILO No.						Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	5		
Interactive lecturing and discussion	Each week students will be introduced to texts and will be encouraged to discuss and analyse them in pairs and in groups	v	v	v	v			
Composition and critical analysis of key concepts and ideas	Students will write critical response papers to engage with key concepts and ideas introduced in class.	v		v	v	v		
Application of knowledge through discussion and presentation	Students will give a presentation related to their project. Presentations will involve the whole class as they provoke discussion and questions	v		v	v	v		
Creative response to comics and graphic novels	Students work collaboratively to create a comprehensive project could include verbal, visual, and auditory elements.	v		v	v	v		

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.						Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5			
Continuous Assessment: _100_ %								
Reading Journal: Students respond to prompts while maintaining a close engagement with course readings.	v	v	v	v	v		30%	Individual Work
Analysis Essay: Students conduct a focused analysis of a course text	v	v	v	v	v		30%	Individual Work
Group Project: Drawing on theories and concepts from the course, students will create their own graphic narrative. This includes a brief written commentary and an informal presentation of this work.			v	v	v		30%	Group Work
Class participation and attendance: Students are expected to contribute to in-class discussions and to demonstrate their learning in reading relevant materials	v	v	v	v	v		10%	Individual work
							100%	

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
Analysis Essay	Organization and Cohesion	The organization between sentences, paragraphs, and ideas is effective and smooth. The writing is cohesive and logically organized.	Organization supports thesis. Transitions between ideas are clear and functional. There is a sense of progression as the argument unfolds.	Elements of Marginal and Good	Some signs of logical organization. May have abrupt or illogical shifts and ineffective flow of ideas. Generally very choppy.	Ideas are not clearly contextualized. Unclear organization.
	Language and Style	Language is used effectively and with a high level of precision.	Almost all sentences are error free. There is a sense of precision in word choice. The writer successfully uses complex sentence structures to convey ideas.	Some minor mistakes remain but these do not confuse the reader or impede meaning. The writer attempts to use complex grammatical patterns to convey ideas.	Many sentences have mistakes, which causes strain for the reader. The meaning is sometimes distorted or unclear.	There are several mistakes in grammar and word choice, often impeding communication and causing severe strain for the reader.

	Analysis	Shows a deep understanding of the relevant texts. Sophisticated reading/interpretative skills apparent.	The discussion of the primary texts is sufficiently detailed. There is a sense of the writer interpreting the text.	Elements of Marginal and Good	Some discussion of the relevant texts, but mostly in general and broad terms. Lacks details.	Very little if any engagement with the primary texts
Reading Journal	Depth of Engagement	Identifies patterns and repeated themes in the readings, including secondary and critical materials; explores the ramifications and implications of the texts; highly effective engagement with specific passages and thoughtful comments on their significance.	Attempts to explore the ramifications and implications of the texts including secondary and critical materials; engages with specific passages and makes comments on their significance.	Elements of Marginal and Good	Makes observations about the reading or asks questions of the material, but the entries are not always tied to specific passages. Several vague comments. Lacking in originality.	Ideas are not clearly contextualized. Many general, vague comments

	Language and Style	Language is used effectively and with a high level of precision and clarity.	There is a sense of precision in word choice and grammar with some minor inconsistencies.	Some minor mistakes remain but these do not confuse the reader or impede meaning.	Several sentences contain errors which causes strain for the reader. The meaning is sometimes distorted or unclear.	There are several mistakes in grammar and word choice, often impeding communication
Group Project	Application of key concepts	Excellent and thorough understanding of key concepts. Shows insightful and subtle ideas.	Very good understanding of key concepts. Shows some insightful and subtle ideas.	Fair understanding of key concepts. Ideas may not always be clearly expressed.	Rather limited understanding and weak application of key concepts.	Poor application of key concepts. Ideas not clearly expressed.
	Teamwork	Dynamic teamwork. All members show great support to one another.	Good team effort. Members work closely together to put all parts together.	Satisfactory team effort. Most members show good support for one another. Parts are generally well connected.	Limited team effort shown. Some members may not participate actively. Some parts are not well connected.	An overall of lack of support for members and organization is not evident.
	Creativity and Originality	Shows very high level of creativity and originality in the project	Shows high level of creativity and originality in the	Not much creativity and originality in the project.	The project lacks creativity and originality.	The project is completely lacking in creativity and

			project			originality
Participation	Participation in in-class activities (such as group discussion and writing tasks)	Makes significant contribution to in-class discussion and completes writing tasks satisfactorily.	Makes occasional contribution to in-class group discussion and completes the writing tasks satisfactorily.	Seldom makes contribution to in-class group discussion; completes most of the in-class writing tasks	Little evidence of participation in class; completes very few in-class writing tasks	Fails to sufficiently participate in in-class activities (including discussion and writing)

Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B)	Marginal (B-, C+, C)	Failure (F)
1. Analysis Essay	Organization and Cohesion	The organization between sentences, paragraphs, and ideas is effective and smooth. The writing is cohesive and logically organized.	Organization supports thesis. Transitions between ideas are clear and functional. There is a sense of progression as the argument unfolds.	Some signs of logical organization. May have abrupt or illogical shifts and ineffective flow of ideas.	Ideas are not clearly contextualized. Unclear organization.
	Language	Exceptionally well composed. Words are used with precision and accuracy. Clear command of grammar.	Strong control of language and a wide lexical range. Grammatical structures are varied and well-constructed.	Effective and functional control. Basic ideas are communicated effectively. Errors may cause some distraction.	There is a high density of errors, causing strain for the reader. The meaning is sometimes lost or unclear

	Analysis	Shows a deep understanding of the relevant texts including relevant research.	The discussion of the primary and secondary texts is sufficiently detailed.	Evident discussion of the relevant texts but lacking in detail.	Very little if any engagement with primary and secondary texts
2. Reading Journal	Depth of Engagement	Identifies patterns and repeated themes in the readings, including secondary and critical materials; explores the ramifications and implications of the texts; highly effective engagement with specific passages and thoughtful comments on their significance.	Attempts to explore the ramifications and implications of the texts including secondary and critical materials; engages with specific passages and makes comments on their significance.	Makes observations about the reading or asks questions of the material, but the entries are not always tied to specific passages.	Demonstrates a minimal understanding of relevant texts and/or lacking in content.
	Language	Exceptionally well composed. Words are used with precision and accuracy. Clear command of grammar.	Strong control of language and a wide lexical range. Grammatical structures are varied and well-constructed.	Effective and functional control. Basic ideas are communicated effectively. Errors may cause some distraction.	There is a high density of errors, causing strain for the reader. The meaning is sometimes lost or unclear
3. Group Project	Application of key concepts	Excellent and thorough understanding of key concepts. Shows insightful and subtle ideas.	Very good understanding of key concepts. Shows some insightful and subtle ideas.	Rather limited understanding and weak application of key concepts.	Poor application of key concepts. Ideas not clearly expressed.

	Teamwork	Dynamic teamwork. All members show great support to one another.	Good team effort. Members work closely together to put all parts together.	Limited team effort shown. Some members may not participate actively. Some parts are not well connected.	An overall of lack of support for members and organization is not evident.
	Creativity and Originality	Shows very high level of creativity and originality in the project	Shows high level of creativity and originality in the project	The project lacks creativity and originality.	The project is completely lacking in creativity and originality
4. Participation	Engagement	Participation in in-class activities (such as group discussion and writing tasks)	Makes significant contribution to in-class discussion and completes writing tasks satisfactorily.	Little evidence of participation in class; completes very few in-class writing tasks	Fails to sufficiently participate in in-class activities (including discussion and writing)

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. **Keyword Syllabus**

   graphic novels, comics, graphic narrative studies

2. **Reading List**
2.1 **Compulsory Readings**
   (Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1.	Bechdal, Alison, *Fun Home* (2007)
2.	Karasik, Paul and David Mazzucchelli, *City of Glass* (2004)
3.	Satrapi, Marjane, *Persepolis* (2004)
4.	Yang, Gene, *American Born Chinese* (2013)

2.2 **Additional Readings**
   (Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

1.	Chute, Hillary. "Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narrative." *PMLA* 123.2 (2008): 452-465.
2.	Eisner, Will, *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative* (2008)
3.	Baetends and Frey, *The Graphic Novel: an Introduction* (2015)
4.	McCloud, Scott, *Understanding Comics* (1994)
5.	McCloud, Scott, *Reinventing Comics: How Imagination and Technology Are Revolutionizing an Art Form* (2000)
6.	Jacobs, Dale "Marveling at *The Man Called Nova*: Comics as sponsors of multimodal literacy." *College Composition and Communication* 59(2) (2007): 180–205.
7.	Mandaville, Alison and Avila, J. P. "It's a word! It's a picture! It's comics! Interdisciplinary approaches to teaching comics." In Stephen E. Tabachnick (ed.) *Teaching the Graphic Novel* (2009): 245–253. New York: The Modern Language Association of America.
8.	Versaci, Rocco *This book contains graphic language: comics as literature* New York: Continuum. (2007)