

Course Description:

An examination of hero figures, ranging broadly from ancient characters such as Gilgamesh to the modern comic book superhero. Literary as well as non-literary materials (e.g., film, comics, games) will be considered. The objective of this course is to track our cultural fascination with superheroes throughout the past century and place it within a broader literary context of the hero figure in general. Why are we drawn to the superhero? What cultural values are reflected through the superhero? What does the superhero say about us and our society in contrast to earlier societies? How does the superhero compare to older mythologies? Additionally, the course will seek to cultivate active reading and analytical skills alongside essay-writing ability.

Required Texts:

The Epic of Gilgamesh – Author Unknown (available through course website).
 Superman: Birthright – Mark Waid et al.
 Ms Marvel Vol. 1: No Normal – Wilson et al.
 X-men: X-Tinction Agenda – Claremont et al.
 The Dark Knight Returns – Frank Miller et al.
 Watchmen – Moore & Gibbons
 The Maxx Vol. 1 – Sam Kieth et al.
 Understanding Comics – Scott McCloud

Assignments:

Final Essay

35%

This paper will be the culmination of the student's work in the course. It will be a comparison of two or more classroom texts with regard to an issue of relevance to in-class discussions. *All topics must be approved by me prior to writing.* Students will receive a detailed description of this assignment along with pre-approved essay topics well in advance of the due date. Minimum length of this essay is 6 pages.

Fanfare Assignment

10%

This assignment will require students to comprise a "fanfare" style character synopsis sheet that outlines the symbolic and literary thematic attributes of a particular superhero.

Quizzes

15%

A series of straightforward reading quizzes designed to test your ability to keep up with our reading schedule and your retention of pivotal information from the texts.

Group Discussions

10%

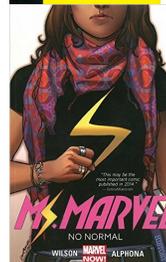
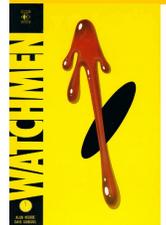
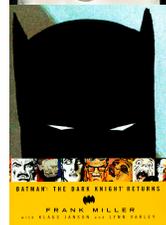
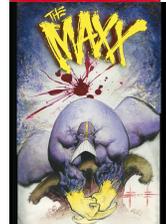
3 Times throughout the term (indicated on schedule) I will divide you into groups, and provide you with a discussion question. Your task is to then facilitate an involved and productive discussion, resulting in a single written response for each group. Every group member will receive the same mark for this report.

Final Test:

30%

Straightforward questions that will address your understanding of both the readings, and of various concepts and perspectives discussed in class.

Note: All written work submitted late will be subject to a penalty of 10 marks (out of 100) per day, including weekends.



Schedule (subject to alteration)

Spring 2018

DATE	READING	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
May 1	None	Introduction – Syllabus Overview	
May 3	None	The Superhero in Western Culture	
May 8	Gilgamesh	The Epic Hero	
May 10	Gilgamesh	Establishing an Archetype	
May 15	Superman	The Superhero	
May 17	Superman; McCloud Ch 1-2	Geeks, Sex, Power	
May 24		IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENT	GD1
May 29	Miller	Batman Deconstructed	
May 31	Miller; McCloud Ch3	Masculinity-Vigilante-Toxicity	
Jun 5	Moore	Allegorical Heroes	Fanfare
Jun 7	Moore; McCloud Ch4	Logical Extremes	
Jun 12	Moore	Free-Will & Agency	
Jun 14		IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENT	GD2
Jun 19	Claremont	Group Dynamics	
Jun 21	Claremont; McCloud Ch5	Continuity, Complexity and Crossover	
Jun 26	Kieth	The Anti-Hero	
Jun 28	Kieth; McCloud Ch 6	The Super-Psyche	
Jul 3		ESSAY-WRITING WORKSHOP	
Jul 5		IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENT	GD3
Jul 10	Wilson	Canon vs Counterculture	
Jul 12	Wilson; McCloud Ch 7-8	The Comics Other	
Jul 17	Black Panther (Film)	Transmediation to Film	
Jul 19	None	Transmediation to Everything Else	
Jul 24	None	IN-CLASS TEST	FINAL TEST

Academic Integrity: The Faculty of Arts requires that the following note regarding avoidance of academic offenses be included on all course outlines: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating), or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71—Student Discipline, <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 —Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4; in addition, consult <http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes> for the Faculty of Arts' grievance processes.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70—Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71—Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72—Student Appeals: <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines//policy72>.

Academic Integrity website (Arts): http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo): <http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Note for Students with Disabilities: The AccessAbility (AS) Office, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS at the beginning of each academic term.

