

**ENG 1131 – Writing Through Media:
The Visual Figurative—Cartoons, Puppets, and Claymation
Section 4841
Spring 2017**

Kevin Cooley
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Office Hours: 11:45 – 12:45 p.m.
Class Location: WEIL 0408D
[Course Website](#)
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M,W,F: 10:40 AM - 11:30 AM
T (Screening): 7:20 PM - 10:10 PM
Room: WEIL 0408D

Course Description:

Analysis of literature, film, and other “high art” texts is a staple in the university forum. This is not the case for every mode of storytelling. Critical discussion of cartoons and other visual “low art” texts finds its home on the college campus in dormitory lounges and at dining hall tables more often than it does in official academic spaces. This class asks students to bring the energy of a wild and speculative conversation amongst friends about cartoons to the classroom. Academics and creators who work with visual texts have begun to re-evaluate the ambiguity of the image, treating its openness and refusal to communicate concretely as a productive site of personal and political meaning rather than a reason to place the visual underneath the verbal in a hierarchy of modes. This course will encourage students to take a critical approach to texts that use visual languages and visual metaphors to construct narratives. Among these kinds of visual texts, we will place an emphasis on the animated cartoon, the stop-motion film, and the animation of material performers, such as puppets. Selected texts will range from the popular and commercial to the obscure and underexposed. Through radical viewing sessions, writing assignments, class discussions, and rejuvenating hands-on approaches to visual culture, students will learn to harvest critical meaning from places many are trained to avoid.

General Education Objectives:

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) *or* Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university’s 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- This course confers General Education credit for Composition (C), and also fulfills 6,000 of the university’s 24,000-word writing requirement.
- *Composition courses* provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.

- The University *Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Required Texts:

- McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. Any edition, paper or digital.
- Furniss, Maureen. *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics (2nd Edition)*. John Libbery & Company Limited, 2008.*

*Only the Second Edition, which was published in 2008, will be acceptable for this course. The First Edition, which was published in 1998, is outdated, and will not be acceptable.

Assignments:

Creative Project #1 (75 Points):

Creative Project #2 (75 Points):

Writing Assignments/Weekly Discussions (250 Words) (75 Points):

Participation/Attendance (75 Points):

Seminar Paper, Initial Draft (50 Points):

Seminar Paper, Final Draft (150 Points):

All assignments add up to 500 points.

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* After three absences, the student's final grade will be lowered by a third of a letter grade per absence. Three late arrivals to class will amount to one absence. Students who miss more than six classes will automatically receive an E grade.
3. *Paper Format & Submission:* All assignments will be submitted electronically, via Canvas. Paper submissions will not be accepted.
4. *Late Papers/Assignments.* Late papers will lose 10% of possible points per day that they are late. Feedback on late final submissions of papers will be returned at the instructor's convenience.

5. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities.* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
6. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism.* Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.
7. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.
8. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
9. *Grade Appeals.* In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
10. *Course Evaluations.* Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
11. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
12. Students caught misusing technology in this classroom will lose points to their participation grade without any verbal warning or indication that would waste class time.
13. *UF's policy on Harassment:* UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>

Course Schedule:

Date	Class Content	Assignments Due for this Day of Class
<i>[Italicized Brackets]</i> denote film viewing days, which will always be on Tuesday.	The material to be covered or films to be watched that day in class/viewing.	*All work other than McCloud, Furniss, and hyperlinked material is either public domain or utilized under fair use, and is available on Canvas.
WEEK 1: Introductions to the Visual Figurative		
Wednesday, 1/4	<i>Introductions</i>	
Friday, 1/6	<i>Cartoon Bodies and Animation Aesthetics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read:</u> McCloud, Chapter 2: “The Vocabulary of Comics”; Furniss, Chapter 1: Introduction
WEEK 2: Modernist Origins		
Monday, 1/9	<i>Little Nemo, Magical Movement, and Cartoon Bodies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read:</u> “Little Nemo in Slumberland,” pages 1-8, 120-128 (Public domain copy available on Canvas). *Alternatively available here: 1905-00-00 through 1905-11-26; 1908-01-19 through 1908-03-15.
<i>[Tuesday, 1/10]</i>	“Fantasmagorie” (1908), “ Little Nemo ” (1911), “Gertie the Dinosaur” (1914), “Sinking of the Lusitania” (1918), “Out Of The Inkwell – Modeling” (1921), “ Out of the Inkwell – Bedtime ” (1923), and more.	--
Wednesday, 1/11	<i>Pressing Play on Pictures: How Comics Came to Life</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read:</u> “Little Nemo in Comicsland,” by Jeet Heer • Prepare Questions/Comment for Discussion
Friday, 1/13	<i>Disney, “Steamboat Willie,” and the Modernization/Industrialization of Cartoons</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read:</u> “Creators,” by Lawrence Lessig, pgs. 21-30., Furniss, Chapter 4 (61-76) • Submit 250 word written response (questions + comment) to Canvas
WEEK 3: The “Pixarvolt”, Capitalism, and Cartoons		
<i>[Tuesday, 1/17]</i>	<i>Pinocchio, Monsters Inc.</i>	
Wednesday, 1/18	<i>Disney/Pixar: Corporate Monsters and Monster Corporations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read:</u> Furniss, Chapter 6 (109-127) • Prepare Questions/Comment for Discussion

Friday, 1/20	<i>The Pixar Short; Judith Halberstam's Take on the Pixarvolt</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read</u>: McCloud, Chapter 3: "Blood in the Gutter" • Submit 250 word written response (questions + comment) to Canvas
WEEK 4: Queer Cartoons		
Monday, 1/23	<i>Queer Revolt, Imaginary Worlds, and SpongeBob Squarepants</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read</u>: "Animating Revolt and Revolting Animation," by J. Jack Halberstam
[Tuesday, 1/24]	<i>Adventure Time: "What Was Missing," "BMO Lost"; Steven Universe</i>	--
Wednesday, 1/25	<i>Putting Halberstam into Context: Fusing Cartoons and Queer Politics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read</u>: Elli Dunn, "Steven Universe, Fusion Magic, and the Queer Cartoon Carnavalesque" • Prepare Questions/Comment for Discussion
Friday, 1/27	<i>The Good, the Bad, and the Queer: Bugs Bunny and the Powerpuff Girls</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read</u>: Furniss, Chapter 12 • Submit 250 word written response (questions + comment) to Canvas • <u>FIRST CREATIVE PROJECT DUE</u>
WEEK 5: Conventional and Commercial Puppetry		
Monday, 1/30	<i>Adventure Time and Mixed Demographic Content</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read</u>: McCloud, Chapter 5: "Living in Line"; "Icon, Index, and Symbol" (summary of Charles Sanders Peirce)
[Tuesday, 1/31]	<i>The Dark Crystal, Thomas the Tank Engine, Star Wars Cantina Scene</i>	--
Wednesday, 2/1	<i>Discussion: Puppetry and Other Worlds</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read</u>: "Thomas the Imperialist Tank Engine," by Jessica Roake; "Playing with the Eternal Uncanny: The Persistent Life of Lifeless Objects," by John Bell • Prepare Questions/Comment for Discussion
Friday, 2/3	<i>Sesame Street vs. "Don't Hug Me I'm Scared": Multiple Introductions to the Puppet</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit 250 word written response (questions + comment) to Canvas
WEEK 6: Avant Garde, Indie, and Formative Puppetry		
Monday, 2/6	<i>"Untitled" Puppet Death, Avenue Q, and Puppet Rebellion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read</u>: "When Avenue Q Goes Local," by Stephen Quigley

[Tuesday, 2/7]	<i>Philippe Genty's "Lands End"; Scenes From: Cuniculus, Twin Houses</i>	--
Wednesday, 2/8]	<i>Discussion: Complicating the Puppet</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read: "Review: Lands End,"</u> by Alison Croggon • Prepare Questions/Comment for Discussion
Friday, 2/10	<i>The Mighty Boosh: Complicating the Puppet Narrative</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit 250 word written response (questions + comment) to Canvas • <u>SHORT SEMINAR PAPER ROUGH DRAFT DUE TODAY (5-6 pages)</u>
WEEK 7: Conventional and Commercial Stop-Motion		
Monday, 2/13	<i>Rudolph, Rankin-Bass, and the Christmas-ing of Stop-Motion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read:</u> Furniss, Chapter 3
[Tuesday, 2/14]	<i>The Box Trolls, \$9.99</i>	---
Wednesday, 2/15	<i>Discussion: Critical Readings of Commercial Stop-Motion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read: "The Box Trolls and Why It's Crazy to Do Stop-Motion Animation,"</u> by Dorothy Pomerantz; <u>"The Box Trolls, Same Sex Parents, and the Never Ending Parade of Gender Transgressive Villains"</u> by Jeremy Redlien; <u>"Is The Box Trolls Transphobic?"</u> by Rachel Kolb (3 short articles) • Prepare Questions/Comment for Discussion
Friday, 2/17	<i>\$9.99 and The Most Popular Girls in School</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read: "Characters of Clay, Extremely Well-Aged,"</u> by Josh Andersen; <u>"Does Barbie Make Girls Want to Be Thin?,"</u> by Dittmar et. Al • Submit 250 word written response (questions + comment) to Canvas • <u>SHORT SEMINAR PAPER FINAL DRAFT DUE TODAY (5-6 pages)</u>
WEEK 8: Avant Garde, Indie, and Formative Stop-Motion		
Monday, 2/20	<i>"Balance": A Broader Conversation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read:</u> Purves, "Evolving Into Stop Motion"
[Tuesday, 2/21]	"Fantastic Planet," Jrni Tinka's " <u>Ruka the Hand</u> ," " <u>Madame Tutli Putli</u> ," "Neighbors," "The Tale of Tales," "Dog," and " <u>Aria</u> " – Short Writing Workshop	--

Wednesday, 2/22	<i>Discussion: A New Take on Stop-Motion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: “Balance,” by Jason Sondhi • Prepare Questions/Comment for Discussion
Friday, 2/24	<i>The Logos of Legos: Star Wars, Play, and Animation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: “Toys,” by Roland Barthes • Submit 250 word written response (questions + comment) to Canvas
WEEK 9: Blending Visual Figuratives		
Monday, 2/27	<i>The Amazing World of Gumball and mixing animation modes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: “Interview with Ben Bocquelet,” by the Marketing Site
[Tuesday, 2/28]	<i>The Little Prince, Gravity Falls: “Little Gift Shop of Horrors,” Adventure Time “Bad Jubies”</i>	--
Wednesday, 3/1	<i>Discussion: The Little Prince and Mixed Approaches</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Furniss, Chapter 9 • Prepare Questions/Comment for Discussion
Friday, 3/3	<i>Barbie: Life in the Dreamhouse vs. The Most Popular Girls in School</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: “Textual Strategies, Plastic Tactics: Reading Batman and Barbie,” by Kendall R. Phillips • Submit 250 word written response (questions + comment) to Canvas • SECOND CREATIVE PROJECT DUE
WEEK 10: Cartooning Meets Reality		
Monday, 3/13	<i>Mixing Cartoons with Live Actors: Space Jammy Marketing Ploy, or Method toward Madness?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: “Film Torments: Space Jam (1996)” by Rich Kee • PAPER PROPOSAL DUE
[Tuesday, 3/14]	<i>Who Framed Roger Rabbit?; Black Mirror: “The Waldo Moment”</i>	--
Wednesday, 3/15	<i>Discussion: Visual Figurative meets Reality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: “Pop Culture Warned Us About Trump,” By Sam Reisman • Prepare Questions/Comment for Discussion
Friday, 3/17	<i>Blues Clues and the Education Imperative of Mixing Media</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: “Sesame Street’ Tackles Incarceration Through Muppet With Father in Jail” • Submit 250 word written response (questions + comment) to Canvas
WEEK 11: Japan and the Visual Figurative		

Monday, 3/20	<i>One-Punch Man and Western Expectations around Anime (One-Punch Man Episode #1 and critical discussion)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McCloud, Chapter 9: Putting it All Together • Submit 250 word written response (questions + comment) to Canvas
[Tuesday, 3/21]	Hayao Miyazaki's <i>Spirited Away</i> , <i>Cowboy Bebop</i> #1	--
Wednesday, 3/22	<i>Discussion: Miyazaki, Ozuka, and Japanese Animation: An Alternate Tradition</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: "The Vocabulary of Manga," by Neil Cohn • Prepare Questions/Comment for Discussion
Friday, 3/24	<i>Bunraku Puppets / Book of the Dead</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit 250 word written response (questions + comment) to Canvas
WEEK 12: Race, Nationality, and the Visual Figurative		
Monday, 3/27	<i>Understanding Race and Power Through Cartooning in We Bare Bears</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: "Allegory..." by Amid Amidi; "We Bare Bears signals a cultural change as an animation" subreddit of r/television.
[Tuesday, 3/28]	<i>Persepolis, Burka Avenger</i>	--
Wednesday, 3/29	<i>Discussion: Islam and Animation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: "Burka Avenger Is the Muslim Female Super Hero We've All Been Waiting For," by Natasha Noman; "Sex, Violence, and Radical Islam: Why Persepolis Belongs in Public Schools,"; and "Persepolis: The Graphic Memoir and Film Adaptation," Parts 3 and 4 only. • Prepare Questions/Comment for Discussion
Friday, 3/31	<i>Puppeted Caricatures, Racism, and Jeff Dunham</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: "Is Jeff Dunham racist? No, but his puppets might be" by Mike Ross • Submit 250 word written response (questions + comment) to Canvas
WEEK 13: The Visual Figurative (After Dark)		
Monday, 4/3	[Safe Selections from] <i>Fritz the Kat: Alternate Audiences for Animation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: "Fritz The Cat: A Look at R. Crumb's X-Rated Animation Masterpiece," by Tony Sokol
[Tuesday, 4/4]	<i>Rick and Morty, Robot Chicken, Moral Orel</i>	--

Wednesday, 4/5	<i>Discussion: The Visual Figurative for Adults</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read:</u> Furniss, Chapter 11: “Animation Audiences” • Prepare Questions/Comment for Discussion
Friday, 4/7	<i>Class Cancelled – Attend “Comics Remixed” Conference and Provide Verification of Attendance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit 250 word written response (questions + comment) to Canvas • <u>ROUGH DRAFT FOR FULL SEMINAR PAPER DUE TODAY (9 – 10 pages)</u>
WEEK 14: Expanding Toward and Expanded From: Comics, Videogames, Picturebooks, and Beyond		
Monday, 4/10	<i>Playing Papers Please: Procedural Rhetoric and Sympathy through Low-Res Cartooning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read:</u> “Persuasive Games: The Proceduralist Style,” by Ian Bogost
[Tuesday, 4/11]	<i>Writing Workshop: Strategies for Success and Peer Review</i>	--
Wednesday, 4/12	<i>“In the Night Kitchen,” “Where the Wild Things Are”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read:</u> “Picturebooks as Aesthetic Objects,” by Lawrence R. Sipe
Friday, 4/14	<i>Comics, Woodcuts, and Early American Needlework</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Read:</u> Emily Caroll, “Face all Red”; Lynd Ward “God’s Man” (Canvas); “Scenes from a Seminary” • Submit 250 word written response (questions + comment) to Canvas • <u>FINAL DRAFT FOR FULL SEMINAR PAPER DUE TODAY (9 – 10 pages)</u>
WEEK 15: So What?		
Monday, 4/17:	<i>Trump, Clinton, Colbert: The Political Sting of Puppetry and Cartooning/ Trump as a Batman Villain</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Watch:</u> From the Second Presidential Debate from 2016 election; Showtime Donald Trump Cartoon; Cartoon Trump Interview with Stephen Colbert
[Tuesday, 4/18]:	--	
Wednesday, 4/19:	Conclusion	

Descriptions of Course Assignments

Full Seminar Paper: (Paper Proposal, Week 11; Rough Draft, Week 14; Final Draft, Week 15)

Students are expected to compose an original argumentative essay that engages with and contributes to the scholarship around a visually figurative text (or texts). The writing will be performed in two drafts. Both drafts are expected to meet the 9-10 page length requirement. Students will propose their paper idea during Week 10 and must receive approval for their topic.

Short Research Paper: (Rough Draft, Week 6; Final Draft, Week 7)

Students will conduct a short research paper (5-6 pages) in preparation for the full seminar paper. Students will receive feedback on their initial draft and will subsequently revise in a final submission. While the short research paper will be on a separate topic than the full seminar paper, it will prepare students to engage with a longer and more sustained argument.

Creative Project(s): (First Project, Week 4; Second Project, Week 9)

- Make an argument with a puppet or stop-motion figure (Accompanied by 750 word explanatory/reflection paper)
- Perform a substantial interview with a professional who creates in a visually figurative domain (not someone you know; must consult me first to see if they work) (Accompanied by 500 word reflection paper)
- Create a political cartoon that comments on a relevant, contemporary situation (Accompanied by 750 word explanatory/reflection paper)
- Write an argumentative essay in comics/photocomics form. (At least: 4 pages, 20+ images, 500+ words)
- Write the script for an animated short (750+ words). Storyboard two scenes from it.
- Write a blog-style review piece of a visual figurative filmic text. See A.V. Club's reviews of shows like *Steven Universe* and *Adventure Time* [here](#) as an example. (1000 words, 4+ images)

Viewing Reflections:

After each viewing, students will be expected to contribute the following for Wednesday's open forum discussion class:

- Two questions for discussion about the text(s) observed.
- One comment or observation about the text they would like to share with the class.

Students are then expected to codify these comments/questions into a substantial post of 250 words or more on Canvas by the beginning of Friday's class.

Being absent from Wednesday's class does not excuse students from submitting this assignment digitally before the beginning of Friday's class.

Daily Readings: All students are expected to read all materials and attend all viewing sessions.

Course-Specific Resources:

[CDisplay Ex](#): a utility for reading digital comics

[File Conversion Software](#): particularly useful for those of you with difficulty submitting assignments as .doc or .docx files.

[Purdue Online Writing Lab](#): an ideal resource for MLA, APA, and Chicago style citations.

[Google Scholar](#): not a substitute for academic journal databases, but useful for a quick survey of the scholarly landscape on a given topic.