ED 520/520G – Teaching with Comics Across the Curriculum
Course Developed by Nick Kremer

Instructor: Nick Kremer
Email: TBA
Semester: XXXX   Credit Hours: 3
Virtual Office Hours: MTWH 4:00-5:00

| **Online Course** |
| This virtual course will be facilitated entirely through Blackboard (http://online.truman.edu/blackboard/). |

COURSE DESCRIPTION: In a world of ever-increasing visual media, graphic novels (and shorter comics) have become an internationally-popular form of text within a wide range of academic disciplines. This course will explore the theory, research, and practice behind reading and writing sequential art narratives (SANs) and the pedagogical strategies associated with effectively using them to teach a wide variety of content across the academic disciplines of visual art, literature, social studies, and STEM (science/technology/engineering/math). Students will read a variety of graphic novels (both fiction and nonfiction), craft their own short sequential art text, and contemplate SAN-inspired instructional activities for classroom implementation within a particular academic discipline. Students will have considerable autonomy throughout the course in choosing texts and topics that align to their own academic disciplines and professional goals/interests.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: [Align to MO Teacher Standards #1.1-4, #2.4-5, #3.1-3, #4.1-3, #6.3-4, #7.3, #8.2, #9.2]

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the theories/principles of literacy related to sequential art narrative texts, including the unique attributes that define/distinguish SANs from other media.
2. Read, analyze, and evaluate a wide variety of sequential art narrative texts (ranging in both content and style/form) proficiently and independently.
3. Compose an original sequential art narrative text related to an academic discipline of expertise.
4. Incorporate sequential art narrative texts and researched-based SAN pedagogy into instructional planning/practice within an academic discipline of expertise.
5. Engage in continuous reflection/inquiry regarding sequential art narrative applications to an academic content area through enhanced familiarity with major SAN writers, resources, and research bases.
6. Collaborate with educators from other academic content areas to foster interdisciplinary learning connections through sequential art narrative texts.

COURSE TEXTS:

[The following texts are required for course participation. Additionally, various articles, SAN excerpts, and weblinks will be posted on Blackboard as assigned reading as noted in the Course Schedule & Works Cited sections of the syllabus]

#1) McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1993.

#2) Fetter-Vorm, Jonathan. *Trinity: A Graphic History of the First Atomic Bomb*. New York: Hill&Wang, 2012.

#3) Moore, Alan and Dave Gibbons. *Watchmen*. New York: DC Comics, 1986.

#4) Tan, Shaun. *The Arrival*. New York: Levine (Scholastic), 2007.

#5) TBD – Self-select a graphic novel related to your academic content area for independent reading/analysis.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

The following is a general schedule of topics and assignments for the course; a detailed listing of specific due dates can be found in the Assignment Due Dates file located on Blackboard. _Disclaimer_: Although this course is offered online, it is not an independent-study course. The use of the Discussion Board will require students to log-in regularly each week to engage in sustained collaboration with colleagues. New lessons/assignments will be made available on the **Saturday** for each upcoming week. Initial discussion board assignment posts will be due on **Monday**, **Wednesday**, and **Friday** of each week and interaction with classmates' posts is due on **Saturday** of the same week, as well as the Practical Application assignment for that week. Unless stated otherwise, **midnight** will be the deadline for all assignments to be submitted.

Week	Topic	Texts	Application Assignment
1	Understanding SANs	* Yang – "Graphic Novels in the Classroom" * Fetter-Vorm – _Trinity: A Graphic History of the First Atomic Bomb_ (Full Text) * McCloud – _Understanding Comics_ (Full Text)	SANs in My Content Area: Practitioner Article Review
2	Reading SANs	* Moore – _Watchmen_ (Ch. 1-5) * Spiegelman – _Maus_ (Excerpt) * Hosler – _Clan Apis_ (Excerpt) * Machiavelli/Clester - _The Prince_ (Excerpt) * Talbot – _Alice in Sunderland_ (Excerpt) * Gonnick – _The Cartoon Guide to Statistics_ (Excerpt)	SANs in My Content Area: Annotated Reading List
3	Writing SANs	* Self-Selected Graphic Novel * Eisner – _Comics & Sequential Art_ (Excerpts) * Shiga – _Meanwhile_ (Excerpt) * Morrison – _We3_ (Excerpt) * Hinds – _Beowulf_ (Excerpt) * Thompson – _Blankets_ (Excerpt) * Lewis – _March: Book Two_ (Excerpt) * Kojima – _The Manga Guide to Calculus_ (Excerpt) * Yorifuji – _Wonderful Life with Elements_ (Excerpt)	SANs in My Content Area: Graphic Novel Review
4	Teaching SANs	* Bitz – "The Comic Book Project: Forging Alternative Pathways to Literacy" * Carter – "Going Graphic: Understanding What Graphic Novels Are – and Aren't – Can Help Teachers Make the Best Use of this Literary Form" * Duad – "Pictures Speak: Graphic Novels for English Language Learners" * Evensen/Carter – "Super-Powered Word Study: Teaching Words and Word Parts Through Comics * Kajder – "Meeting Readers: Using Visual Literacy Narratives in the Classroom" * Schwarz – "Expanding Literacies Through Graphic Novels" * Weiner – "Show, Don't Tell: Graphic Novels in the Classroom"	SANs in My Content Area: Composition Project
5	Closure	* Tan – _The Arrival_ (Full Text) *Colleagues' SAN Compositions * Colleagues' Research Articles	SANs in My Content Area: Instructional Application / Research Article

.COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Professionalism Performance Evaluations**   *5 Pts X 5 Weeks = 25 Pts*

Professionalism is an important part of being an educator whose actions are constantly visible to students, colleagues, and the community at large. You will receive a weekly performance evaluation throughout the course that cumulatively assesses your professional work habits in the following areas: preparation (as evidenced through frequent, thoughtful references to course readings), collaboration (as evidenced through frequent, thoughtful, and collegial contributions to colleagues' Discussion Board threads) and punctuality (to assignment deadlines).

2. **SANs in My Content Area: Practitioner Article Review**   *10 Pts*

As part of your introduction to sequential art narratives during the first week of the course, you will independently research and review a professional article or practitioner interview that discusses the use of comics, graphic novels, and/or other visual-verbal texts in your academic discipline area. Your review should concisely summarize the key findings of the article/interview as well as include your own commentary on how you envision SANs being used in your content area.

3. **SANs in My Content Area: Annotated Reading List**   *10 Pts*

As you are reading a variety of graphic novel excerpts for the course, you will begin to research and compile a "Top 10" list of graphic novels that could potentially be used in your academic discipline area. Your reading list should include a short annotation for each text that provides a brief summary of the text, a sample of the art within it, and a rationale for how and why that particular text might be useful in your content area classroom. NOTE: It is <u>not</u> an expectation that you have read the texts on your list; this assignment merely asks you to investigate options for future reading.

4. **SANs in My Content Area: Graphic Novel Review**   *15 Pts*

After analyzing a variety of graphic novel excerpts as part of our weekly course collaboration, you will self-select a graphic novel from your Annotated Reading list to read and critique independently. Your review of the text should include an evaluation of: a) the narrative elements of the text; b) the visual elements of the text; and c) the usefulness of the text as a resource within your academic content area.

5. **SANs in My Content Area: Composition Project**   *20 Pts*

After discussing the compositional processes used to design sequential art narratives and analyzing the compositional approaches used within a variety of graphic novel excerpts, you will design an instructional assignment within your academic discipline that requires students to create an original sequential art text in order to communicate learning related to your academic content area. Your assignment should include: a) an assignment overview / prompt page; b) a scoring rubric; and c) an exemplar text (created by you) that models what a proficient composition might look like. Your original compositions will be shared with your colleagues during the final week of the course.

6. **SANs in My Content Area: Instructional Application/Research Article**   *20 Pts*

After reading about and discussing a variety of pedagogical approaches to teaching sequential art narratives in K-12 classrooms, you will write a short research article (that could be submitted for publication in an educational practice publication) that discusses strategies for using sequential art texts within your academic discipline area. Your article may be theoretical in nature, or may focus on any related action research you have conducted in your classroom during the course.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

- **What to Expect from a Web-Delivered Course:** This course is designed to meet virtually. It is essential that you access the course site continually throughout the week, each week, to access course announcements, participate in discussion forums, submit assignments, etc. Online courses require both self-motivation and self-discipline, but they provide you, the learner, with significant flexibility to complete the weekly assignments at your own pace.

- **What the Instructor and Your Colleagues Expect from You:** By enrolling in this course, you have agreed to contribute to weekly discussions regularly and to submit all assignments in a timely manner. In order for students to be able to effectively participate, *all* students must meet the required posting deadlines for these assignments. Also, as with any classroom, we wish to foster a safe learning environment where all opinions and experiences, no matter how different or controversial they may be perceived, must be respected in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse. You are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an *idea*, but you are not to attack an *individual*. Our differences will add richness to this learning experience. Please consider that sarcasm and humor can easily be misconstrued in online interactions and generate unintended disruptions. Working as a community of learners, we can build a polite and respectful course ambience.

- **What You May Expect from the Instructor:** The course instructor will monitor private email no less than once a day and respond to messages within 24 hours of receipt. He/she will monitor and occasionally participate in online discussions and further help foster the learning community through Course Announcements and Lessons. All major projects will be returned with feedback within 1-2 weeks of submission and posted to the online gradebook.

Policy on Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to do their own academic work. Any student involved in cheating on an assignment or other form of academic dishonesty is subject to a reduction in score for an affected project and/or disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion from the class, the student's academic program, or the University.

Students with Special Needs

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Disability Services office (x4478) as soon as possible.

Statement on Academic Dishonesty

Notice of Compliance –In compliance with federal law and applicable Missouri statutes, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, age, race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission to or employment in its education programs or activities. The University complies with the regulations implementing Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; and other state and federal laws and regulations.

APPENDIX A: DISCUSSION BOARD PROMPTS

Week 1A: After reading Yang's article "Graphic Novels in the Classroom," reflect upon the opportunities and challenges that exist in utilizing graphic novels (and other SANs) in your academic content area. What personally drew you to take this course, and what do you hope to get out of it?

Week 1B: In what ways does *Trinity: A Graphic History of the First Atomic Bomb* build knowledge and/or skills that relate to your academic content area? How does the SAN format of the text uniquely impact the manner in which students might access these concepts / skills in comparison to other media or instructional methods?

Week 1C: Select and scan a page from *Trinity: A Graphic History of the First Atomic Bomb* (that has not already been posted by a colleague). Using what you have learned from McCloud's *Understanding Comics*, analyze the page using the following SAN literacy principles: a) abstraction; b) paneling; c) closure; and d) visual/verbal interplay.

Week 2A: How does a vivid understanding of specific conceptual knowledge from within your academic content area impact your reading of *Watchmen*? How does *Watchmen* encourage / demand interdisciplinary thinking within its readers?

Week 2B: Select and scan a page from *Watchmen* (that has not already been posted by a colleague). Using what you have learned from McCloud's *Understanding Comics*, analyze the page using the following SAN literacy principles: a) time/motion; b) stylistic expression; c) color; and d) encapsulation.

Week 2C   Discuss one of the SAN excerpts included in Week 2's lesson in relation to the difficulty of classifying it as a pure literary text vs. a pure informational nonfiction text. In what ways does the text inhabit both realms? Does this help or hinder its utility in presenting new information to the reader?

Week 3A   Compare and contrast the compositional design of two of the SAN excerpts included in Week 3's lesson. How does the writer of each text exploit various literacy aspects of the SAN medium in order to better achieve his/her goals in writing the text? Cite relevant commentary from McCloud or from Eisner's *Comics and Sequential Art* to support your evaluation.

Week 3C   Write and post a script for the exemplar sequential art text that you are going to create for the SANs in My Content Area: Composition Project assignment. Briefly reflect on how you think the process of drafting a script will help or inhibit the remainder of the task.

Week 3C   Sketch out by hand 2-3 panels for the exemplar sequential art text that you are creating for the SANs in My Content Area: Composition Project assignment. Next, choose one of the comic-making software programs referenced in Week 3's lesson to digitally create those same 2-3 panels. Post both copies to the Discussion Board and discuss the benefits and drawbacks of the two different modes of composition.

Week 4A   Read one of the pedagogical articles listed in Week 4 and reflect upon how its findings could be applied to instruction within your academic content area.

Week 4B   Read another of the pedagogical articles listed in Week 4 and reflect upon how its findings could be applied to instruction within your academic content area.

Week 4C   Read another of the pedagogical articles listed in Week 4 and reflect upon how its findings could be applied to instruction within your academic content area.

Week 5A   Post the final draft of your exemplar sequential art text for your SANs in My Content Area: Composition Project and use your scoring rubric to self-evaluate your work. Read your colleagues' exemplar texts and provide constructive commentary.

Week 5B   After reading *The Arrival*, discuss the growth you have experienced throughout this course in regards to achieving a better understanding of the SAN medium and how it can be used in your academic content area. Select and scan panels from *The Arrival* that metaphorically represent aspects of your personal journey.

Week 5C   Post the final draft of your SANs in My Content Area: Instructional Application/Research Article. Read your colleagues' articles and provide constructive commentary.

WORKS CITED:

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Carter, James Bucky (2009). "Going Graphic: Understanding What Graphic Novels Are – and Aren't – Can Help Teachers Make the Best Use of this Literary Form." *Education Leadership*, 66 (6), 68-73.

Clester, Shane and Machiavelli (2011). *The Prince*. Highland Park, IL: Round Table Comics.

Duad, Fatimah (2011). "Pictures Speak: Graphic Novels for English Language Learners." *ECV: Engaging Voices & Cultures, 1* (2), 18-37.

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Evensen, Erick & Carter, James Bucky (2010). *Super-Powered Word Study: Teaching Words and Word Parts Through Comics*. Gainesville, FL: Maupin House Publishing.

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Hinds, Gareth (2007). *Beowulf*. Somerville: Candlewick Press.

Hosler, Jay (2000). *Clan Apis*. Columbus, OH: Active Synapse.

Kajder, Sara (2007). "Meeting Readers: Using Visual Literacy Narratives in the Classroom." *Voices from the Middle, 14* (1), 13-19.

Kojima, Hiroyuki & Shin Togami (2009). *The Manga Guide to Calculus*. (Translation). San Francisco: No Starch Press.

Lewis, John & Andrew Aydin (2015). *March: Book Two*. Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Productions.

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Moore, Alan and Dave Gibbons (1986). *Watchmen*. New York: DC Comics.

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Spiegelman, Art (1993). *The Complete Maus: A Survivors Tale*. New York: Pantheon.

Talbot, Bryan (2007). *Alice in Sunderland: An Entertainment*. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Books.

Tan, Shaun (2007). *The Arrival*. New York: Levine (Scholastic).

Thompson, Craig (2003). *Blankets*. New York: Top Shelf Productions.

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Yang, Gene (2008). "Graphic Novels in the Classroom." *Language Arts*, 85 (3), 185-192.

Yorifuji, Bunpei (2012). *Wonderful Life with the Elements: The Periodic Table Personified*. (Translation). San Francisco: No Starch Press.