

Adding Some *Bam! Pow! Boom!* To Your Outreach with Comics

A roundtable discussion

University of North Texas Libraries

John Edward Martin, Scholarly Communication Librarian, john.martin@unt.edu

Bobby Griffith, Government Information Reference Specialist, bobby.griffith@unt.edu

Coby Condrey, Collection Development Liaison Librarian, coby.condrey@unt.edu

This presentation is made available under a [CC-BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license by John Edward Martin, 2019

What is “outreach”?

- ◆ Identifying and engaging new library users
- ◆ Promoting library services, resources, and spaces
- ◆ Providing a personal connection to the library and its people
- ◆ Encouraging creative uses of the library and its resources
- ◆ Engaging with the scholarly, creative, and cultural life of the community

Why comics?



- A popular genre enjoying a renaissance
- A multi-disciplinary, multi-media art form
- An emerging area of scholarship for many faculty & students
- Important cultural work: gender, race, sexuality, religion, diversity & inclusion, censorship, etc.

BAM!

POW!

BOOM!

This exhibit shares highlights from UNT Libraries unique comic holdings.

Featuring comics throughout history, from 18th century political cartoons to graphic novels and manga!

COMICS IN THE LIBRARY

APRIL 10TH

AUGUST 15TH

WILLIS LIBRARY FORUM EXHIBIT SERIES

WILLIS 140



This is a quiet study area. Please come in quietly.

COMICS

VIVA LA REVOLUTION

THE SHADOW HERO

THE DOGS

bullet or words

Dredd's Girl

DEFENDER

THE DOGS

bullet or words

THE DOGS

MAUS

BATMAN THEME

ESSENTIAL

WOLVERINE

MAUS

2020 E

WOLVERINE

SECRET WARRIOR

WOMAN WARRIOR

BOOM POW BOOM

AMERICAN SLENDOR

REINVENTING COMICS

WILHELM EISENBERG COMICS AND CONTEMPORARY ART

LAST

Comics in the Academy Panel Discussion

- Dr. Spencer Keralis, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- Dr. Marshall Needleman Armintor, UNT, English
- Dr. Jason Helms, TCU, English
- Dr. Samantha Langsdale, UNT, Philosophy & Religion

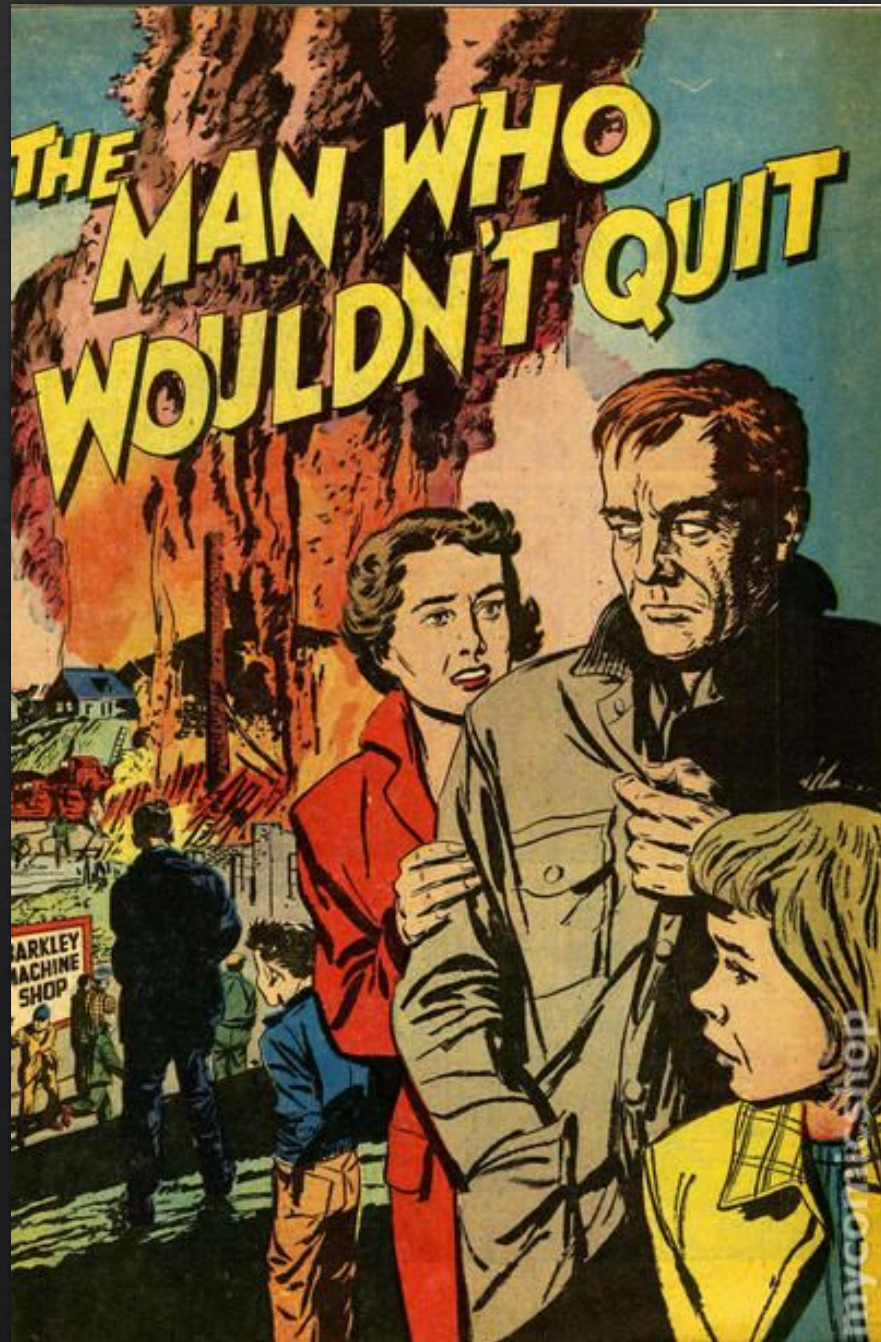
A two-hour discussion about comics history, theory, cultural implications, teaching, and scholarship.

The event attracted over 60 attendees, including faculty, students, staff, and librarians.



Government Comics





U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
 Public Health Service National Institutes of Health
 DHEW Publication No. (NIH) 72-330



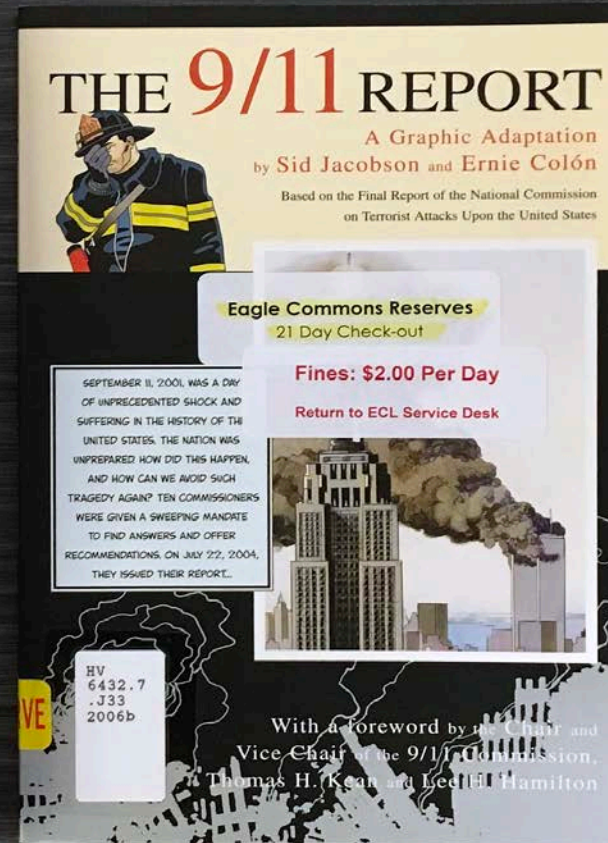
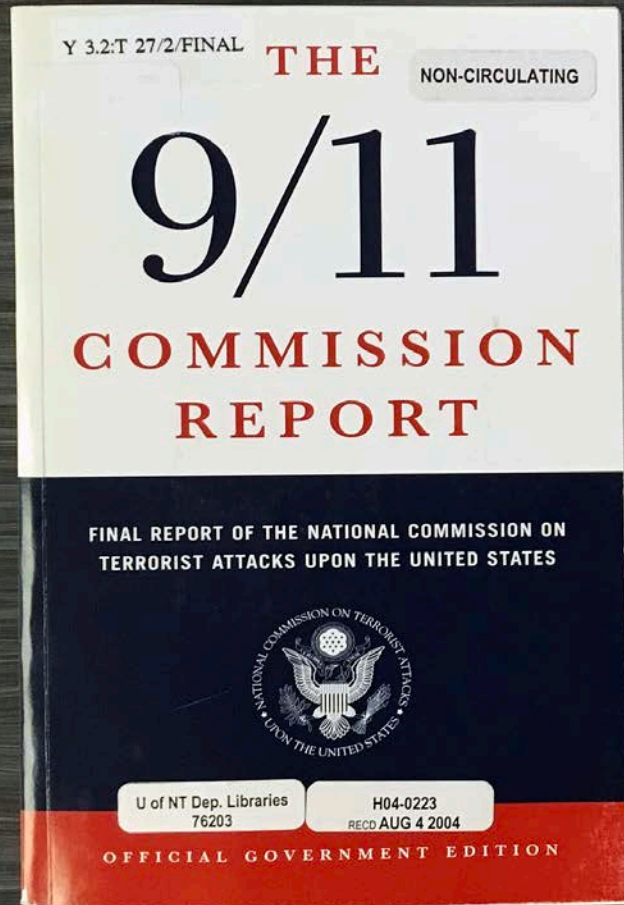
PREPAREDNESS 101:

ZOMBIE PANDEMIC



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

Government documents as Graphic Novels



Follow-up activities

- Conversation with Sommer Browning: Comics as Poetry (June 2017)
- Film Screenings: *Wonder Women: The Untold Story of American Superheroines*; *The Spiral Cage* (Fall 2017)
- Hosted National Library of Medicine's “Graphic Medicine: Ill-Conceived and Well-Drawn!” exhibit & panel discussion (January 2018)
- Graphic Novel Collection Enhancement Project (2018-19)

Collection Enhancement



Selections!



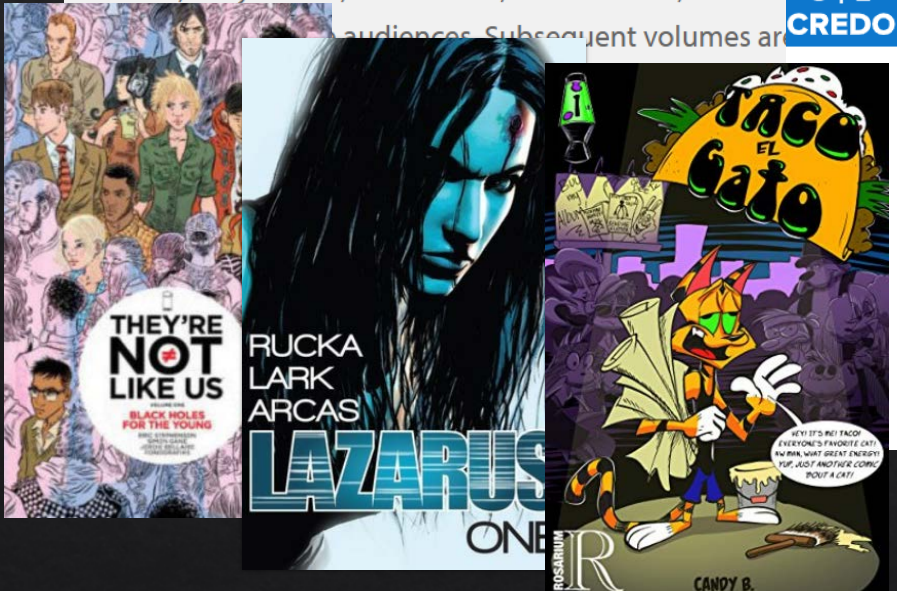
Graphic Novel Collections

Graphic Novels have grown in popularity in all types of libraries. These Graphic highlight some of the best, most popular titles for all readers, along with great titles in graphic novels. Find titles for your pleasure readers, writers and creators, and pop culture aficionados. Please note not all titles are appropriate for youth, and not all titles are available in all territories.

Graphic Novels & Comics Collection - Ranging in story and style, this collection includes high-demand series starters and standalone graphic novels and comics. Includes titles by Kirkman, Tony Moore, Julie Maroh, David Homel, Brian Van...



Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Literature: The Encyclopedia of the Novel



Ongoing Comics Outreach


University Libraries
Comics Studies at UNT

UNT
EST. 1890

HOME ABOUT CONTACT ARCHIVE

More thoughts on Captain Marvel

Posted March 27th, 2019 by John & filed under Comics in the news, Diversity, Reviews.




Our Comics Studies Reading Group had a few more thoughts to share about *Captain Marvel*...

Read more

Tags: [films](#) [MCU](#) [Reviews](#) [women in comics](#)

I Got 99 Problems But a Skrull Ain't One: The Many Faces of Misogyny in Captain Marvel

Posted March 13th, 2019 by John & filed under Diversity, Reviews, Scholarship.





Recent Posts

- [More thoughts on Captain Marvel](#) March 27, 2019
- [I Got 99 Problems But a Skrull Ain't One: The Many Faces of Misogyny in Captain Marvel](#) March 13, 2019
- [Cheryl Blossom: Too "Liberated" for Riverdale](#) March 11, 2019
- [Comics Studies Reading Group Spring 2019 Update](#) January 23, 2019
- [Reflections on Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse](#) December 21, 2018

RSS Feed

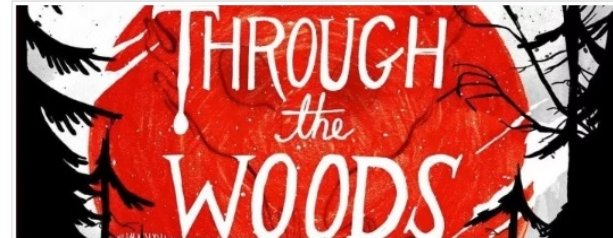


Categories

- [A Closer Look](#) (2)
- [Comics in the library](#) (9)
- [Comics in the news](#) (4)
- [Comics Reading Group](#) (3)
- [Diversity](#) (4)
- [Reviews](#) (7)
- [Scholarship](#) (6)

Older posts

Comics Studies Reading Group Spring 2019 Update



We recently completed the first semester of our UNT Comics Studies Reading Group, and held our first meeting of 2019. The group has readers from UNT and TCU, including faculty, staff, librarians, and students. We've had a regular attendance of 4-6 people, plus occasional others who have contributed to the conversations about some really interesting comics, graphic novels, and web-comics. We're hoping to expand both our membership and our readings this semester, so come join us if you're interested! Just email john.martin@unt.edu to get on the mailing list for upcoming meetings. Our next one is **Saturday, March 23, 2019, from 1-2:30 p.m. at Denton Brewing Co. (Note: This was rescheduled from February!)**

In the Fall, all of our gatherings were held on Saturdays at Harvest House in Denton, but we've decided to mix it up a little for 2019. In January, we met at Café Modern in the Fort Worth Museum of Modern Art, for a brunch discussion of Eleanor Davis's *Why Art?*. In February, we'll check out the Denton Brewing Company. We're also open to trying other places that offer comfortable seating, drinks & food, and a convenient location for our members.

For those who weren't able to join us before, but would like to know about what we've been reading, here's a quick run-down of what we've covered and links to the readings for our next meeting.

Fall 2018

September: Brian K. Vaughan, Marcos Martin, & Muntsa Vicente's *Barrier*



This innovative webcomic offered us a look at both the technology and the unique reading experience of webcomics, as well as the themes addressed in the story, which includes "barriers" of all kinds: physical, cultural, political, linguistic, and aesthetic. Technology itself, we discovered, could be both an aid and a barrier to understanding the visual language of comics. Considering the implications of various types of boundaries and divisions between readers and the art was a great starting point for

the group in thinking about the value of comics in general.

October: Victor Lavalle, Dietrich Smith, and Joana LaFuente, *Victor Lavalle's Destroyer* (2018) and Jeff Lemire and Jose Villarrubia, *Trillium* (2014)



Both of these comics examine the consequences of advanced



Recent Posts

- [More thoughts on Captain Marvel](#) March 27, 2019
- [I Got 99 Problems But a Skrull Ain't One: The Many Faces of Misogyny in Captain Marvel](#) March 13, 2019
- [Cheryl Blossom: Too "Liberated" for Riverdale](#) March 11, 2019
- [Comics Studies Reading Group Spring 2019 Update](#) January 23, 2019
- [Reflections on Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse](#) December 21, 2018

RSS Feed



Categories

- [A Closer Look](#) (2)
- [Comics in the library](#) (9)
- [Comics in the news](#) (4)
- [Comics Reading Group](#) (3)
- [Diversity](#) (4)
- [Reviews](#) (7)
- [Scholarship](#) (6)

Older posts

Blog Stats

5,244 hits

Social Media

The screenshot shows the Facebook page for 'Comics Studies at UNT'. The page header includes the name and a search bar. The profile picture is a circular logo featuring a character reading a comic. The cover photo displays the text 'COMICS STUDIES AT UNT' in large, bold, black letters. Below the cover photo are interaction buttons for 'Liked', 'Following', 'Share', and 'Send Message'. The main content area features a post from 'Comics Studies at UNT' dated July 12 at 4:27 PM. The post text reads: 'The next meeting of the UNT Comics Studies Reading Group will be on Saturday, August 17, 2019, 1-2 p.m. at Jupiter House Coffee. The text selected for this meeting is Diary of a Teenage Girl by Phoebe Gloeckner. Hope to see some of you there!'. Below the text is a book cover for 'The Diary of a Teenage Girl' by Phoebe Gloeckner, published by Amazon.com. The book cover is red with white text and a small illustration. To the right of the post, there are sections for 'Community' (with 88 likes and 94 followers), 'About' (with a 'Send Message' button and the URL 'blogs.library.unt.edu/comics'), and 'Page Transparency'.

The screenshot shows the Facebook group page for 'Graphic Content - UNT Comic Club'. The page header includes the group name and 'Public group'. The cover photo is a vibrant comic-style banner with the text 'JOIN THE GREATEST COMIC CLUB ON EARTH CALLED GRAPHIC CONTENT UNT COMIC CLUB SPRING 2019 NOVELS / GRAPHIC ART / SLICE OF LIFE / WEBCOMICS / HISTORY / INFORMATIVE / ...'. Below the cover photo are interaction buttons for 'Joined', 'Notifications', 'Share', and 'More'. The main content area features a post by 'Dallas Johnson' shared 10 hours ago. The post includes a comic panel with a character in a white uniform and a gold helmet. The character has a speech bubble that says 'WHOA. ARE YOU A TALKING HORSE?' and another that says 'OH. WOW.'. Below the character, there are two more speech bubbles: 'ALL HORSES ARE TALKING HORSES.' and 'BUT I BELIEVE YOUR HELMET IS ALLOWING US TO COMMUNICATE.'. To the right of the post, there are sections for 'INVITE MEMBERS' (with a search bar and 'Invite Member' buttons), 'MEMBERS' (with 22 members and profile pictures), 'SUGGESTED MEMBERS' (with 'Hide' and 'Invite Member' buttons), and 'DESCRIPTION' (with the text 'A comic club for Everyone! Do you like reading or creating your ... See More').

Supporting Classes & Events

LITERARY CRITICISM.

FALL 2019 | TR 11-12:20 | ENGL 4150
Dr. Joanna Davis-McElligatt

I WAS NOT ALONE IN FAILING TO GRASP
THE SYMBOLIC FUNCTION OF LITERATURE.



How do literary theory and criticism work in the discipline of English as interpretive strategies, as ways of reading? Find out as we explore Toni Morrison's *Beloved* alongside philosophers and critics in Julie Rivkin & Michael Ryan's *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (3rd ed).

Comics Literature/Literary Comics



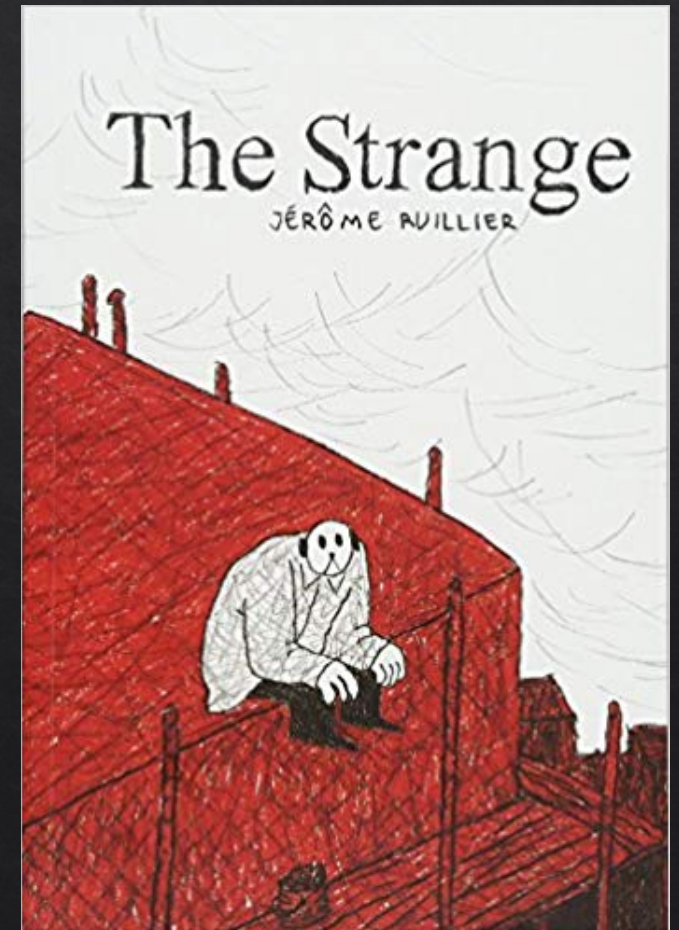
ENGL 2400.001
Literature, Media
and Popular Culture
FALL 2019
TR 11-12:20

Instructor:
Dr. Bryan Conn

This class will investigate the transactions between serious literary fiction and a medium long regarded as its antithesis, comics. Questions pursued will include: How and why have some comics creators attempted to inculcate a literary sensibility in their works? Alternatively, how and why have some literary writers incorporated the history and conventions of comics into their texts (and even themselves scripted comics)?



For further details, email Dr. Conn:
bryan.conn@unt.edu



Comics Studies Guide



Comics Studies: Introduction

- Introduction
- Researching Comics
- Collections & Exhibits
- Communities & Events

Thoughts on comics



"Some people are worried about the future of comics and some people are busy building it. That latter group are my heroes."--Gail Simone

Check This Out!

- [Falling Sky](#) (a graphic novel by Scout Tran-Caffee) An innovative web-comic by the artist Scout Tran-Caffee that was a 2014 and 2015 Eisner Award Nominee.
- [DHQ Special Issue: Comics as Scholarship](#) September 2015 issue of DHQ (Digital Humanities Quarterly) devoted to "Comics as Scholarship".

What is Comics Studies?

Comics studies is a field of academic research focused on comics and sequential art, including comic books, comic strips, cartoons, graphic novels, animation, digital media, and film. Comics studies can include the theory, history, philosophy, aesthetics, or cultural relevance of comics, as well as the industrial production, marketing, and collection of comics or comic art. Comics studies may draw on scholarship from a broad range of disciplines including history, literary studies, media and communication studies, art & art history, sociology, linguistics, philosophy, business & marketing, library & information science, or legal studies (particularly in regard to first amendment & censorship issues). Since the 1990s, comics studies has developed into an active field of scholarly research, with a number of books, journals, conferences, and programs devoted to the topic.

On the following pages, you'll find resources for scholars, students, librarians, comic creators or collectors, and others interested in the study of comics and related art forms.

For more on comics studies, see:

- Lee Konstantinou, "Comics Studies Comes of Age" (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2/19/17)
- Yasco Horsman, "The Rise of Comic Studies" (Oxford Art Journal, 1/22/15)
- Christopher Murray, "Comics Studies has been undervalued for too long" (The Guardian, 2/18/15)
- Laura Sneddon, "An Introduction to Comic Studies" (CBR.com, 10/3/11)

Scholarly Communication Librarian



Comics Studies: Researching Comics

- Introduction
- Researching Comics
- Collections & Exhibits
- Communities & Events

Thoughts on comics



"The format of the comic book presents a montage of both word and image, and the reader is thus required to exercise both visual and verbal interpretive skills. The regimens of art (eg. perspective, symmetry, brush stroke) and the regimens of literature (eg. grammar, plot, syntax) become superimposed upon each other. The reading of the comic book is an act of both aesthetic perception and intellectual pursuit."--Will Eisner

Comics Studies Resources @UNT

- [W](#) [Comics Studies Resources @UNT](#) A convenient handout listing some places to get started on researching comics at the UNT Libraries

Books

These are just a few of the comics-related books in the UNT Library. Please try the "Suggested Subject Headings" in the right-hand column to search for other comics studies materials in our library.



Comic Books

Databases and websites

- [Anime and Manga Research Circle](#)--a group for scholars, students, or fans of anime and manga
- [Comic Book Database](#)--an online user-created database of comics, graphic novels, manga, and other related materials.
- [Comic Book+](#): Offers downloadable digital, public domain copies of Golden and Silver Age comic books for reading or research.
- [Comics Research Bibliography](#): This is an international bibliography of comic books, comic strips, animation, caricature, cartoons, bandes dessinées, and related topics.
- [ComicsResearch.org](#): Comics scholarship annotated bibliographies. primarily covers book-length works about comic books and comic strips, from "fannish" histories to academic monographs, providing detailed information and guidance on further research.
- [Digital Comic Museum](#)--an online archive of public domain Golden Age comics

Citing & Writing

- [Comic Art in Scholarly Writing: A Citation Guide](#) (by Allen Ellis)
- [Lists of Terms for Comics Studies](#) (Andrei Molotiu)

Subject Headings

- [Suggested Subject Headings \(by Doug Campbell\)](#)
- [Comic books, strips, etc.](#)
- [Comic Books Strips Etc History And Criticism](#)
- [Cartoons and comics](#)
- [Comic strip characters](#)
- [Comic strip characters in motion pictures](#)
- [Comics \(Graphic works\)](#)

Discussion

- ◆ What other ways might comics & graphic novels be used in outreach or education?
- ◆ What other media or types of materials might be included in this kind of outreach?
- ◆ What are the particular advantages to using popular collections this way?
- ◆ What challenges or obstacles do you see in doing this kind of outreach at your institution?

Thanks!

Thanks to the many colleagues, students, and staff who have contributed to all our comics studies activities, especially our Comics Studies Reading Group and blog contributors, our panel discussion participants, exhibit contributors and visitors, the faculty who teach comics, and the students and fans who read and love comics.

Special thanks to Dr. Spencer Keralis, our collaborator on all of these projects!