Lit X – Comics and Graphic Novels

Programme(s) in which it is offered: All UG programmes

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Course Category: Minor	**Schedule of Offering**: Odd
Course Credit Structure: 3	**Course Code:** LL160
Total Number of Hours: 45	**Contact Hours Per Week:** 3
Lecture: 3	**Tutorial:** 0
Practical: 0	**Medium of Instruction:**
Date of Revision: 21-06-2021	**Skill Focus:** Employability
Short Name of the Course: LXCX	**Course Stream** *(Only for Minor Courses)*: Literature and Linguistics
Grading Method: Regular	**Repeatable:** Credit/Audit/Repeatable
Course Level: Beginner	

Course Description

This is a Minor course which is also tagged as a 'Lit X' course. This series of courses is designed specifically to look at relatively newer and upcoming genres of literature: 20th- and 21st-century upstarts that have captured the imagination of readers, and have carved a niche for themselves in a corner of the high table occupied by the classics. Such courses deal with the expanding idea of literature, and with genres that are pushing the boundaries of what literature is and can be.

Course Introduction

We live in an increasingly visual world. Storytelling in the last few decades has undergone many changes, with the visual becoming ever more important, and one of the key drivers of this change have been comics and graphic novels. This course introduces and discusses this genre in detail, tracing its development through history, focusing on its success and popularity in recent times, and covering key theoretical concepts related to both studying and creating comics and graphic novels. The course will also introduce learners to famous works and authors, as well as critics and theorists in this field, which is as much literature as it is popular culture.
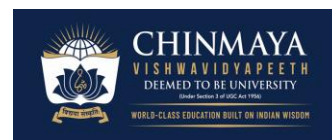
Course Objectives

This course aims to:

1. introduce learners to comics and graphic novels as a genre of literature.
2. introduce learners to the narrative and visual interpretation theories that will enable them to better understand works in this genre.
3. introduce learners to famous writers and works in this field.

Course Outcomes

At the end of this course, learners will be able to:

1. identify and describe the broad concerns related to the study of comics and graphic novels.
2. critically analyse comics and graphic novels in terms of their literary value, their artistic quality, and their effectiveness as visual narratives.
3. recognise famous authors and works in the field.
4. create a basic comic or graphic narrative of their own.

PO-CO Mapping

PO-CO Mapping Matrix

| CO/PO Mapping	PO1	PO2	PO3	PO4	PO5	PO6
CO1						
CO2						
CO3						
CO4						

Prerequisites and other constraints

This course will be taught in English, and will require intensive reading, and also quite a bit of writing, in this language. Prospective students must self-evaluate and only join the course if they determine that they are comfortable with this. Students must be willing to actively participate in all tasks and activities in class, and must also do all assignments, graded or non-graded, diligently.

Pedagogy

The teaching in this course will be through a combination of lectures, classroom discussions, and interactive activities. The instructor's role will be primarily to introduce concepts, assist
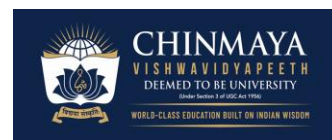
with textual reading and interpretation, and generate questions of interest, but the discussion around these questions is expected to be mostly student-driven, with some minor assistance and prodding from the teacher.

Suggested Reading:

1. McCloud, S. (1993). *Understanding comics: The Invisible Art*. Northampton, Mass.

2. Eisner, W. (2001). *Comics and Sequential Art*. 1985. Tamarac: Poorhouse.

3. Varughese, E. D. (2017). *Visuality and Identity in Post-Millennial Indian Graphic Narratives*. Springer.

4. Kelley, B. (2010). Sequential art, graphic novels, and comics. *SANE journal: Sequential Art Narrative in Education*, 1(1), 10.

5. Sen, O., & Baviskar, A. (1994). *River of stories*. Delhi: Kalpavriksha.

6. Spiegelman, A. (1997). *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. Pantheon.

7. Satrapi, M. (2004). *Persepolis*. Pantheon.

Evaluation Pattern

Analytical and critical ability, as well as the ability to express opinions clearly and concisely, are extremely important for this course, and hence class presentations and analytical assignments constitute a crucial evaluation component here. Individual progress will be measured through quizzes, and a final project that will include a comics creation task.

Evaluation Matrix

	Component Type	Weightage Percentage	Total Marks	Tentative Dates	Course Outcome Mapping
Continuous Internal Assessment (CIA) Components*	Quizzes (5x)	20 % 0f CIA Marks	20	Fortnightly	1, 3
	Written Assignments (2x)	20% of CIA Marks	20	Week 6; Week 10	1, 2
	Class Presentations (2x)	20 % of CIA Marks	20	Week 4; Week 8	2, 3
	Final Project	40 % of CIA Marks	40	Week 12	1, 2, 3, 4
	CIA Marks	**100 %**	**100**	---	---
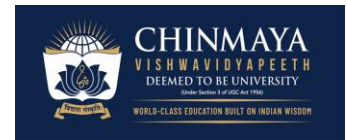
 * The assignments involved in CIA will be subject to plagiarism checks. A submission with unexplained similarities exceeding 30% for Undergraduate courses, 20% for Postgraduate courses and 10% for PhD courses will be reverted for resubmission. The final submission is subject to score penalization as defined by the course instructor at the start of the course, with a clear communication of the same to all the registered candidates.

Module Sessions

Module 1: Introduction   (4 Hours)
- Defining comics and graphic novels
- Discussing visual narratives

Reading:

1. Booker, M. K. (2014). *Comics through Time: A History of Icons, Idols, and Ideas, Vol. 1*. America. ABCCLIO, LLC, pp.xxv-xxxvii.
2. McCloud, S. (1993). *Understanding comics: The invisible art*. Northampton, Mass, pp. 7-9.
3. Cooney, D. (2011). *Writing and illustrating the graphic novel*. Barrons, pp.7-9.

Activities:

a) Discussion 1: What is 'a comic'?
b) Task 1: Solve the cipher

### Module 2: The History of the Sequential Narrative   (6 Hours)
- Ancient narratives
- Cartoons and comics
- Criticism and restrictions
- The Age of Superheroes
- Resurgence and The Graphic Novel
- Indian sequential art traditions

Reading:

1. C Van Lente, F. and Dunlavey, R. (2012). *Comic book history of comics*. IDW Publishing.
2. Duncan, R., Smith, M. J., & Levitz, P. (2015). *The power of comics: History, form, and culture*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
3. Babic, A. A. (Ed.). (2013). *Comics as history, comics as literature: roles of the comic*
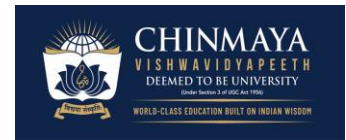
book in scholarship, society, and entertainment. Rowman & Littlefield.

4. Tilley, C. L. (2012). Seducing the innocent: Fredric Wertham and the falsifications that helped condemn comics. *Information & Culture*, 47(4), 383-413.

Activities:

a) Debate 1: Was Wertham's criticism of comics justified?

Module 3: The Language of Comics (10 Hours)

- The vocabulary of comics
- Frames and panels
- Imagery and Timing
- Writing and Sequential Art
- Textual study 1: *A Contract with God*

Reading:

1. McCloud, S. (1993). *Understanding comics: The Invisible Art*. Northampton, Mass.

2. Eisner, W. (2001). *Comics and Sequential Art*. 1985. Tamarac: Poorhouse.

3. Eisner, W. (2017). *A Contract with God and other tenement stories*. WW Norton & Company.

Activities:

a) Task 2: Create a short comic strip

b) Discussion 2: On *'A Contract with God'*

## Module 4: Famous Authors and Works: Around the World (10 Hours)

- Part 1: Community Comics – Will Eisner
- Part 2: Fantasy and Superheroes - Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman
- Part 3: Lived experience – Art Spiegelman, Marjane Satrapi
- Part 4: Endearing yet much more – Herge, Goscinny and Uderzo
- Part 5: Comics in different cultures
- Textual study 2: *Maus*

Reading:

1. Spiegelman, A. (1997). *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. Pantheon.

2. Weiner, S., & Eisner, W. (2012). Faster than a speeding bullet: The rise of the graphic novel. NBM Publishing.

3. Levitz, P. (2015). Will Eisner: Champion of the Graphic Novel. Abrams.
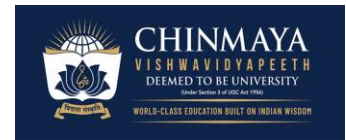
4. Duncan, R., Smith, M. J., & Levitz, P. (2015). *The power of comics: History, form, and culture*. Bloomsbury Publishing, pp.291-314.

5. Petersen, R. (2010). *Comics, Manga, and Graphic Novels: A History of Graphic Narratives: A History of Graphic Narratives*. ABC-CLIO.

6. Van Ness, S. J. (2014). *Watchmen as literature: A critical study of the graphic novel*. McFarland.

Activities:

a) Discussion 3: Comics as literature

Module 5: Famous Authors and Works: The Indian Perspective   (10 Hours)

- Part 1: Culture and Mythology – *Amar Chitra Katha*
- Part 2: Syndication and growth – *Indrajal Comics*, Aabid Surti
- Part 3: The Indian experience – Sarnath Bannerjee, Appupen
- Part 4: The next generation
- Textual study 3: *River of Stories*

Reading:

1. Varughese, E. D. (2017). *Visuality and Identity in Post-Millennial Indian Graphic Narratives*. Springer.

2. Kaur, R., & Eqbal, S. (2018). *Adventure Comics and Youth Cultures in India*. Routledge India.

3. Nayar, P. K. (2016). *The Indian graphic novel: Nation, history and critique*. Routledge India.

Activities:

a) Debate 2: Are modern Indian comics getting stuck with specific themes?

Module 6: Conclusion and review   (5 Hours)

- Film Adaptations
- Reflections of society
- Course wrap-up: Future directions

Reading:

1. Gardner, J. (2012). *Projections: Comics and the History of Twenty-first-century Storytelling*. Stanford University Press, pp.180-193.

Activities: Discussion 4: The future of comics and graphic novels