

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

2019-2020 MLCS 199 B3: Special Topics: Superheroes in Comics & Beyond
(Winter Term)

Instructor: Chris Reys-Chikuma
Office: Arts 210A

Time: MWF 2:00-2:50
Place: T 1 103

E-mail: reynschi@ualberta.ca

Office Hours: just after the classes,
or by appointment

Bachelor of Arts / Major in Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies/undergraduate-program-information/prospective-undergraduate-students>

Course Prerequisite: none or consent of department

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate prerequisites for the course.

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed

Community Service Learning component

Required Optional None

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

- Exam registry – Students’ Union
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

Course Description, Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:

Superheroes have been around with us for a long time. From Hercules to Achilles, Zorro, Superman and Wonder Woman, they have been entertaining us yet they also move us and serve as strong models or counter-models. The persistence of their “myth” shows how meaningful they are. In this course, after briefly studying the roots of superheroes in mythology, we will then historicize their surrounding contexts of each of the 10 superheroes selected, whether it is social, political or historical (WWII, the 60s, the 80s, the contemporary). We will also see the impact of these superheroes on real citizens (fans, vigilantes, ...). Furthermore, we will especially cover the new comics

models, such as the ignored or marginalized superheroines (Wonder Woman, ...), superheroes from more diverse ethnicities/cultures/religions (Kamala Khan, ...) and non-American superheroes (Captain Canada, French, Japanese, Chinese versions of SH, ...).

For the final project, students will be able to choose between three options: write a traditional essay, write a comics script about a superhero/ine (in a group of two), and reaching out to other students and communities through CSL. As for the students who choose CSL, they will have to work 20 hours with one of the partners selected by CSL and write a 3-full page report to explain how what they did (being an “ordinary superhero” helping people in need of support) is related to the topic of the class (superheroism).

Objectives: The objective in this course is to survey the phenomenon of the superhero over its 80+ years of existence and to situate each one of the 10 superheroes studied in class within its historical context. We will especially focus on its slow but steady evolution towards more multicultural models.

Outcomes: At the end of this course, successful students will be able to: -understand the superhero phenomenon -situate each occurrence of this phenomenon studied in class within a historical context -work in groups to discuss ideas about historical context and multicultural diversity -write an essay about one superhero and situate it within a precise historical context.

Course Format:

The objectives of this course will be learned from a combination of short formal lectures, with audiovisual materials (PPT posted on eclass), students’ presentations, and assigned readings.

Texts:

Required

1. *Batman Celebration 75 years*, DC Comics (9781401247584).
2. *Watchmen*, Alan Moore & al., DC Comics; De Luxe edition ed. (9780930289232).
3. *Next Year’s Man of Steele*, David Belke, Samuel French Publisher (9781554352623).
4. *Wonder Woman, A Celebration of 75 Years*, DC Comics (9781401265120).
5. *Astérix, Olympic Games*, Goscinny & Uderzo (9780340191699).
6. *Akira*, Vol. 1, Publisher: Kodansha Comics (9781569715260).
7. *Ms. Marvel: No normal*, Vol. 1 (Kamala Khan), Willow Wilson & al., Marvel (9780785190219).
8. *Superman, Red Son*, Millar & Johnson, DC Comics (9781401247119).
9. *Kick Ass*, Millar & al., (9781534307193).
10. *Superhero: A Reader*, Charles Hatfield & al., UP Mississippi (9781617038068).

All books are available at the campus bookstore. If all these textbooks together are too expensive, organize yourself with one or two classmates to buy some of them and share them. Only one copy is available at the Rutherford library, although copies of most of these textbooks are also available at many EPL locations.

Recommended:

McCloud, S. *Understanding Comics*. Any edition.

Additional Course Fees

Yes No

Important Dates: [See Academic Schedule in current Calendar](#)

First Day of Class: January 6, 2020

Add/Delete Date: January 17, 2020

50% Withdrawal Date: February 5, 2020

Winter Term Reading Week: February 18-21, 2020

Withdrawal Date: April 1, 2020

Last Day of Class: April 8, 2020

Final Exam Date: 9:00am April 21th

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): Please consult the following site:

<https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations> (Exams)

Deferred Final Examination: For information on how to apply for a deferred exam see [“I Missed my Final Exam, Now What?”](#)

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

Attendance & Participation 15%

Quizzes: 5 x 4% = 20%

Oral Presentation: 1 = 10% (TBD in class at the end of the first week)

Final project: 25% (presented in class the last week [10%], written version due by the last class, April. 8th [15%])

Final exam: 30% (April. 21th)

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Attendance is required.

Participation means active involvement in the discussions, especially in the small groups.

Quizzes will be on 5 of the assigned textbooks. Each one should not take more than 5 minutes and will have 5 questions on the basic understanding of the assigned textbooks.

As for **the oral presentation**, students will have to choose one topic related to the class and to one of the textbooks and present it in class in front of other students. This presentation could be done in a group of 2. It requires a PPT that contains the main points of the presentation. The topic should be proposed to and accepted by the instructor at least one week before the presentation and the PPT should be sent to the instructor at least 24 hours before the oral presentation.

The final exam will be cumulative on the assigned textbooks and discussions in class.

As for the **final project**, students will have the choice between three options:

-a traditional 12-full-page essay (NYT, 12, double space).

-a CSL option (a full class will be dedicated to CSL in collaboration with a CSL member during the second week of the semester, explaining what are the options proposed by

CSL and what are the commitments and steps to follow; more can be found about the CSL project for this course on the CSL website <https://www.ualberta.ca/community-service-learning> and on the page for this course:

<https://apps.arts.ualberta.ca/csl/Instructors/Courses?instructorId=816>)

-a creative project made of two parts: a 6-page comics that could be made in a group of two, and an individual 6-page essay reflecting on the comics created.

Each final project will have to be presented to the whole class during the last week, with a PPT.

Required Notes:

Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.

Student Responsibilities:

Academic Integrity:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the [Code of Student Behaviour](#) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

Sexual Violence Policy:

It is the policy of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct. Resources and more information can be found at <https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-life/sexual-violence>

Territorial Statement:

“The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.” (*from the beginning of the Calendar*).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the Code of Student Behaviour.

In this course,

Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of the course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result. In this course, attendance is required and participation will count for 20%. Participation means mainly to be actively involved in the regular small group discussions.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Students should consult in advance with the instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment. If so, the instructor may grant an extension just one time throughout the course with no penalty. However, if a second excuse is granted, half of the mark assigned for this particular work will be deducted. Otherwise all assignments should be handed in on the stated deadline. Any assignment not handed in in time or unexcused late assignments

will not be given any marks. Late excuses will not be accepted for any reason.

Disclaimer:

Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

Student Resources:

The best all-purpose website for student services is: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

Accessibility Resources: (1 – 80 SUB)

The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information to register for services visit the [Accessibility Resources](#) webpage.

The Academic Success Centre: (1-80 SUB)

[The Academic Success Centre](#) offers a variety of workshops on effective study and exam strategies. There are in-person and online sessions available for a modest fee.

The Centre for Writers: (1-42 Assiniboia Hall)

The [Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

Health and Wellness Support: There are many health and community services available to current students. For more information visit the [Health and Wellness Support](#) webpage.

Office of the Student Ombuds:

The [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) offers confidential interviews, advice and support to students facing academic, discipline, interpersonal and financial difficulties.

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
<p>Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.</p>	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
<p>Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.</p>	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
<p>Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.</p>	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
<p>Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.</p>	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
<p>Failure.</p>	F	0.0	0-59

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