

CMX 200

MW 2-3:15

HUM 211 (+ZOOM)

STUDENT HOURS M 12³⁰-1³⁰; W 9⁴⁵-10⁴⁵

office HUM 581 or by Appt
+ZOOM

NICK SOUSANIS@SFSU.EDU



SF STATE

MATERIALS

- SKETCHBOOK
- DRAWING TOOLS
- + EXPAND AS YOU DEVELOP YOUR OWN APPROACH

READINGS

ALL INSTRUCTOR-SUPPLIED

* AND VISIT COMIX EXPERIENCE FOR A DISCOUNT ON MORE GREAT COMICS!

COMICS, CAMPUS, & YOU!

INTRO TO COMICS AS A MEANS FOR SELF-REFLECTION AND VIEWING ONESELF IN RELATION TO THE UNIVERSITY AS PART OF THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE.

READ

AND ANALYZE DIVERSE MEMOIR COMICS TO HELP FACILITATE SELF-REFLECTION.

EXPLORE

CAMPUS SITES & VISIT WITH UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO LEARN ABOUT RESOURCES & PATHWAYS TO SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE CAREERS AND BEYOND.



NOTE:

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIVES ALWAYS COME FIRST. DEADLINES ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY KEEP THE CONVERSATION MOVING, BUT LIFE IS BIGGER, SO THINGS ARE FLEXIBLE. COMMUNICATE AND WE'LL WORK IT OUT TOGETHER.

after Bell,

Porcellino,

Passmore,

& Barry

MAKE

COMICS & RELATED FORMS FOR SELF-EXPRESSION & DOCUMENTING CAMPUS EXPLORATIONS.

ASSESSMENT:

- 45% ONGOING ACTIVITIES (COMICS, SKETCHNOTES, IN-CLASS AND OUT)
- 5% STUDENT HOURS
- 30% 3 SMALL PROJECTS
- 20% FINAL ANTHOLOGY

STUDENT HOURS (5%): TALK COMICS, SHARE YOUR IDEAS, ASK QUESTIONS, HELP ME GET TO KNOW YOU! MUST DO ONCE FOR FULL CREDIT.

* LET ME KNOW IF YOU DON'T WANT ME TO SHARE ANY OF YOUR IMAGES ON SOCIAL MEDIA. - NS

ONGOING ACTIVITIES (45%): FREQUENT IN-CLASS & AT-HOME COMICS-MAKING & RELATED EXERCISES POSTED TO CANVAS. **NO PRIOR DRAWING EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!!** EVALUATION ON COMPLETION NOT SKILL. EMPHASIS ON INVENTIVENESS, CURIOSITY, EFFORT, AND WILLINGNESS TO DIVE IN AND EXPLORE!

3 SMALL PROJECTS (30%): 1) REFLECTIVE COMIC: HOW YOU GOT HERE & WHERE YOU WANT TO GO 2) COMIC ABOUT CAMPUS 3) MEMOIR COMIC

FINAL (20%): ANTHOLOGY OF FAVORITE PIECES FROM THE TERM + 2 NEW: ON YOU, ON UNIVERSITY...



WWW.SPINWEAVEANDCUT.COM @NSOUSANIS

San Francisco State University: Comics Studies
CMX200 Comics and the First Year Experience
Comics, Campus, and You!
Fall 2024

Class Meetings: 2-3:15 HUM 211 [+ ZOOM]

Instructor: Nick Sousanis sousanis@sfsu.edu Office HUM 581

Student Hours: M 12:30-1:30; W 9:45-10:45 or by appointment (in-person or Zoom)

A Note about Now: Let me acknowledge to start off, current circumstances aren't quite normal, and our expectations must reflect that. As understanding as I typically am about deadlines and workload, I'm even more so now. Your health, your lives *should always* come first and we can work out solutions for whatever is going on (with a good channel of communication). I want to see the work we do together as helpful to what you are experiencing and not an added burden. This doesn't mean we won't work hard and that it won't be challenging, just that it serves you as something meaningful and relevant to find your own way into it. Deadlines are important, because they allow us to keep the conversation moving and keep learning from one another, but life is bigger, always, and definitely now, so I'll remain flexible and we'll work it out together.

The course will be in person, but to continue to take care of each other may mean masking in indoor spaces, and we'll do our best with ventilation/filtration. If you're sick – please stay home and take care of yourself. I will be streaming the class on zoom and recording it, so even if you can't make it, you can tune in live or watch when you can to access what we did, and all the instructions and resources will be available on Canvas. The key in all of this is to reach out and let me know what's going on and what you need. As a teacher, I see my role as being there *to support you in where you are going*. With that said, on with what we'll do together...

Overview: Introduction to the comics medium as a means for self-reflection and viewing oneself in relation to the university as part of the first-year experience. Understand the comics form by reading and analyzing diverse memoir comics all which will be relevant to students' lives and help facilitate self-reflection. Explore campus sites and visit with university community members to learn about resources and pathways with which to support their successful college careers and beyond. Learn to make comics (as well as zines and other related image-text hybrids) for self-expression and to document campus explorations.

Students will gain an understanding of the comics form (along with zines and other related image-text hybrids) at the same time as they explore places and learn about resources available on campus for their successful college careers and beyond. The comics (and sketchnotes and maps) we make about campus over the term may be put together into a collaborative document – to construct a resource base to help others understand the ins and out of campus and get a handle on what is available to help students find their way. It's a way of creating students' own wayfinding guide, where they'll see the stories of classmates, their struggles and solutions, and be able to use this as a source for their own growth and success.

Philosophy: *We will study and we will play and we will see that those activities aren't so different.*

Project-based focus on different ways of understanding oneself in relationship the University. Class will move between comics readings and discussion, comics-making activities, and campus visits – each aspect feeding and informing the others and fueling your discoveries.

KEYS: explore, expand, investigate, instill, study. We will make comics as self-reflection and expression, as well as to document campus itself. Hands-on experiential learning, making comics and other visual documentation to explore campus and resources, all to help students thrive in their college career and beyond! Approach the comics and the college experience from a variety of perspectives – what shaped you and where might you go, campus history, resources, and facilities, and the programs and people who make this a place of ideas to take you places.

The sorts of activities will try to aid in our explorations: comics-making, sketching, sketchnotes, interviews, journaling, mapping, student-invented assignments, making of all sorts!

Themes: Memoir, graphic medicine, poetry comics, mini-comics, campus/SF, teaching, literacy, disability, Zines.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- SLO #1: To reflect on one's education and future goals;
- SLO #2: To familiarize students with the physical, economic, educational, social, and cultural resources available on campus;
- SLO #3: Understand general affordances of comics and other text-image forms so as to address and interpret the course subject matter in a sophisticated modality;
- SLO #4: Become familiar with a diverse set of readings and authors through wide range of comics readings;
- SLO #5: Create comics as a means of self-discovery and expression, using a variety of different approaches and techniques;
- SLO #6: Create a visual community wayfinding guide reflecting on SF State campus and resources essential to student success and enjoyment;

Required Readings: All readings will be instructor-supplied and available on Canvas. Also, *Comix Experience* offers discounts on readings and all comics for class members with a printout of the syllabus – visit them and other SF comics shops!

Required Materials: Since we will be drawing regularly in this course, you will need to have a few simple and readily available materials on hand. You can of course get more than these but here are some basics:

- A notebook/journal/sketchbook of some sort
- Drawing tool of your choice (pen, pencil, brush pen, etc.) (Color options are nice too)
- Your toolkit will expand as you develop your own approach to making the work.

Assignments and Evaluation:

45% Ongoing Activities (comics, sketchnotes, in-class and out)
5% Student Hours
30% 3 small Projects
20% Final Anthology

Student Hours (5%): You are required to visit with professor during *student hours* [in person or on zoom] or make an appointment for a different time to have a conversation about your work, address any questions you wish to explore. To receive full credit – you must show up at least once. This is an opportunity to talk about your ideas one-on-one with your professor and help me get to know where you are coming from better. Take advantage of it!

Ongoing Mini Assignments (25%): Frequent in-class & take-home quick comics-making, sketching, and other related activities. You will keep a composition notebook or journal in which to do the majority of these assignments and then upload them to Canvas (along with a brief reflection (~100 words) on the experience). Assessed entirely on *completion not skill*. Emphasis will be placed on inventiveness, curiosity, effort, and willingness to dive in, explore, and see where it takes you!

You will submit these regular projects by taking a quick digital photo of the work (cropping the photo if possible), and posting each assignment to Canvas before the start of class on the day it is due. This will serve

as a gallery to share with your classmates, as well as a place for us all to respond to your work over the term. And please note, prior drawing experience is neither necessary nor expected! While I've dreamed up a lot of activities, I welcome suggestions to try from you!

3 Small Projects (30%): 1) Reflective Comics. We'll do initial scaffolding by creating sketch-maps of how you got here and where you want to go, and with some discussion, this will culminate in a short comic putting this together. 2) A comic helping others get to know some site or resource on campus. 3) A short memoir comic from any period of your life or dealing with a family story.

Final Project (20%): A small anthology/zine bringing together some of your key work over the term, along with two additional pieces created for this purpose. One, a memoir or reflective piece and a second, directly addressing something about the university/experience. See it like a statement about you - showing off what you've learned, how you put your ideas together, your grasp of comics/zines, and something you are excited to share with others! Most importantly, create something that is meaningful to you!

Before you begin the final project, you will be required to submit a formal proposal (100-150 words) outlining your intent and the form the project will take.

Potential Activities: Grids & Gestures, Simple people, Eyebrows & Boids, Lumpies, Monsters, Monster 4-panel, Comics in response to our readings: i.e. Gabrielle Bell observational comics, Lynda Barry, Comic as Journal, Comics about first day of classes – confusion/how to make it better, Mini-comics – improv, experiential, planned out/reflective, Comic/sketchnote/maps about you: how you got here; Comics as Origin story – on you or on something about campus – how does a place come into being, how did your life come to be as it is?, Why SFSU & where do you want to go?, What if you'd made a different choice at a key moment – imagine in a comic how your life might have gone differently, Comic on the Community where you live, Comic about your commute, Comics about classes or about this class, Comic as orientation/expectations, Teach something in comics, Sketchnote of another class, Interview comics (classmate, professor, staff...), Comic as activism/issues, Live sketching on campus, comic on favorite spots on campus - to study/hang out, List comics after Summer Pierre, more!

Potential Readings: Gabrielle Bell excerpt, Lynda Barry *One! Hundred!* Demons! excerpt. Ben Passmore *Your Black Friend*, John Porcellino comics, Derf Backderf *True Stories*, Sophie Foster Dimino, Summer Pierre, Eleanor Davis, Emma Hunsinger, Jillian Tamaki, Leela Corman, Tyler Cohen, Ebony Flowers, Lucy Bellwood – travel comics, excerpts from *Drawing Power*, Love & Rockets excerpt, Zara Slattery – covid comic, Covid comic on nurses, Tony Pickering Diabetes comic, Hyperbole and a half, and more...

Places we might visit/People who might visit with us: Sutro Library, Longmore Institute on Disability, Greenhouse, Global Museum, Observatory/Planetarium, Library/archives, Campus tour (Meredith Eliassen), Ctrl+P, Cesar Chavez rooftop, ...

Rough Arc: Intro, Grids & Gestures; Simple People through Monsters; Gabrielle Bell reading with special guest – professor Frederik Kohlert (September 4)!; Lynda Barry activities and readings; Sketchnotes; Affordances of comics overview; Visits; Analysis; Mini-comics making; Mapping; ...

We'll be figuring out the exact arc of the course as we go – shifting to do what works best for everyone. We may find we want to spend more time with things or make room for ideas that I hadn't anticipated, and we've left space to do that. You will always be apprised of the schedule in class, as well as via email & Canvas. So that we all remain on the same page, you are expected to regularly check Canvas and your sfsu.edu account.

Final Exam Monday December 16, 2:45-4:45 **Project Sharing!**

Note: I frequently share examples of what we do in class on my educational website/social media. Please let me know if you *do not* want me to share any of your images.

Canvas: We will be using Canvas for this class. Those of you unfamiliar with Canvas can find resources and assistance online as well as with the office of Academic Technology. You are automatically enrolled in Canvas for all of your courses registered at SFSU. *Academic Technology* website: <http://at.sfsu.edu>

Canvas log-in page: <https://canvas.sfsu.edu/canvas>

Course Policies

Classroom approach: I consider learning as acquiring the tools to follow one's own curiosity, and thus teaching means providing a framework, establishing an environment for participants to explore and thrive. Rather than being out in front, I see my role as accompanying students on a journey we all make together.

Classroom Policies: This is a class that thrives on interaction, improvisational collaboration, so it's best if everyone is in attendance and on time. That said, given the circumstances and in regards to my note at top – our expectations will be different. The main thing is to keep me posted on what's going on if you can't join in regularly – we can work with anything from a point of communication.

Late Assignments: Again, as above, I'd like to see deadlines observed or clear communication about missing them if necessary – conversations grow best when we're working together. But understanding, flexibility, and grace are essential now more than ever – so keep me updated as you can, and we can make it work.

Contact and Feedback: You are encouraged to visit me during student hours or make an appointment to discuss class, raise questions, or just check in. When emailing me, please use your "sfsu.edu" account when possible and put "CMX 325" and topic in the subject line so I am sure to address it more quickly.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a form of cheating or fraud; it occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgment, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an "F" grade. All instances of plagiarism in the College of Liberal & Creative Arts will be reported to the Dean, and may be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email dprc@sfsu.edu.

University Policy on Sexual Harassment & Violence: SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:

The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; [SAFE Place website http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/](http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/)

Counseling and Psychological Services Center - (415) 338-2208; [Counseling and Psychological Services Center website http://psyservs.sfsu.edu](http://psyservs.sfsu.edu)

For more information on your rights and available resources see: [Title IX at SF State http://titleix.sfsu.edu](http://titleix.sfsu.edu)