

ART 3310: GRAPHIC NOVEL ILLUSTRATION

9.30-10.45am, TR | Jan - May, 2021 | Zoom Meeting, SRSU

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Office Hours (*phone calls only, please*): MW 8.30-8.55am, TR 9-9.25am, and by appointment

***** Please note that, due to the threat of COVID-19, class and office hours will be held online *****

Zoom Meeting

An online meeting occurring every Tuesday and Thursday from 9.30-10.45am can be found here:

<https://sulross.zoom.us/j/97446407163>

Course Introduction

This is an intensive course that will help you understand how to create comics through projects, critiques, and discussions.

Learning Objectives

In this course, you will:

- Tell stories visually
- Understand how to use color
- Simplify your drawings to create the essence of an idea
- Work with multiple deadlines
- Turn some of your life experiences into short comics
- Make a six-page comic

Grading and Evaluation

You will be graded on exercises, attendance and participation in discussions and critiques, homework projects, and a final project. Details on how a project is graded is included in each project description. No extra-credit projects will be offered, so it is in your interest to submit work by the deadline.

Work submitted **no later** than the beginning of class, the day of the deadline, will be graded. **Any work submitted *one minute* past the beginning of class will be awarded a zero. There are no exceptions to this rule.**

Your final class grade will consist of:

- *Projects*: 70%
- *Attendance, participation, and in-class exercises*: 15%
- *Final Group Project*: 15%

Final Examinations

You must turn up to the final examination. If you do not, your overall class grade will drop an entire letter.

Materials and Text

There is a class fee of \$ ~~15~~ 15 to purchase the following supplies, plus the cost of 100 blank index cards from the SRSU bookstore:

~~Please purchase the following supplies for class. They are essential so you can do the exercises and projects.~~

Due to this class temporarily being taught virtually, you have the option of working digitally using a graphics tablet or purchasing the supplies below through local stores, blickart.com, cheapjoes.com, or some other online retailer.

- Ink marker, such as a Sharpie fine point
- HB and 2B pencils x 2
- Kneaded/regular eraser (I strongly advise a kneaded eraser)
- Sketchbook (at least 8.5- x 11-inches)
- 100 Blank index cards (these are available at the bookstore)

You also need to purchase a pack of 100 blank index cards from the SRSU bookstore.

No textbook is required for this course but a flash-drive is essential for saving your work. You are expected to back up your projects to another location, such as at a free service like www.dropbox.com or www.google.com/drive. Not submitting a project because you lost your flash-drive or some other technical difficulty will not be accepted as an excuse and will earn you a zero for that project.

Tobacco Products

Tobacco products of any kind and e-cigarettes are not permitted in the classroom.

Email

You are expected to check your email account EVERY day. This is the account that is registered at Blackboard and is usually your Sul Ross email account.

Rules and expectations

Attendance is **compulsory**. If you must miss a class for a school-related activity, the absence must be discussed (and arrangements made regarding coursework) **prior to the absence**. If you must miss a class for an emergency or illness, please contact me **by email or phone as soon as possible**. Six (6) absences result in you being dropped from the course with a grade of “F” as per Sul Ross State University policy. Five (5) unexcused absences will result in a zero for your attendance and participation grade. Note that one absence is 50-minutes. Arriving to class **on time** is also essential – **arriving late more than two times will be counted as one absence. Lateness is defined as 15-minutes after the start of class. Leaving before class ends will result in you being marked absent for that day.**

Please note that an absence is 50-minutes, not one class period. Below is a guide to how much each absence impacts your attendance and participation grade.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|--------|
| • One (1) unexcused absence: | -20% | • Four (4) unexcused absences: | -80% |
| • Two (2) unexcused absences: | -40% | • Five (5) unexcused absences: | - 100% |
| • Three (3) unexcused absences: | -60% | • Six (6) unexcused absences: | FAIL |

No cell phone usage. No social-networking websites. No instant-messaging. No checking personal emails. Headphones and earbuds are allowable ONLY when you are working, but not when the professor or a fellow student is speaking. **Doing any of these, or anything I consider disruptive**

to the class, will drastically drop your attendance and participation grade. You may be also asked to leave the class and will be marked absent for that day.

Late work will not be accepted.

Plagiarizing, cheating, or any other dishonest behavior in the classroom will not be tolerated. Rules and regulations regarding plagiarism, dishonesty, and other issues concerning classroom participation can be found in University Rules and Regulations and Student Handbook.

ADA Needs

It is Sul Ross State University policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If a student would like to request such accommodations because of a physical, mental, or learning disability, please contact the ADA Coordinator in the Ferguson Hall, room 112 or call (432) 837-8691. Please relate all requests for special accommodations to the instructor by the third class period.

SLOs

1. Students will expressively communicate an original idea or concept visually through an original artwork.
- 3d. Students with a concentration in Digital Art will be able to demonstrate knowledge and familiarity of digital image creation and knowledge of professional practices in digital art.
 - a. Demonstrate the ability to produce a cohesive professional thematic capstone project which is well crafted and has a defined technique or personal style.
 - b. Demonstrate technical mastery of digital skills as they apply to the selected media.
 - c. Ability to produce a professional portfolio that meet current industry standards.
 - d. Ability to work in a timely manner.

Marketable Skills

1. Solving problems through critical thinking.
2. Creating ideas with independence of thought.
3. Communicating professionally through written and spoken presentation.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that this syllabus is subject to change.

DATE	IN CLASS	PRESENTATION
Jan 12 (I)	Class introduction and syllabus overview	
Jan 14 (R)	PROJECT – Daily Comic Strip Character Q&A, plus two-character designs PRESENTATION - Read a graphic novel from the list in the appendix	<i>01 - Character model sheets</i>
Jan 19 (I)	Work on your character Q&A, plus two-character designs	
Jan 21 (R)	DUE TODAY: Character Q&A, plus designs x 2 Exercise: Eyebrows	

Jan 26 (T)	DUE TODAY: Eyebrows Exercise: Car Cat Castle Self-portrait	<i>02 - Types of layout pt. i</i>
Jan 28 (R)	PROJECT – Three single-panel comics	<i>02 - Types of layout pt. ii</i>
Feb 2 (T)	DUE TODAY: Three single-panel comics PROJECT – Editing	
Feb 4 (R)	Continue working on your Editing project	<i>03 – Important Historic Graphic Novels</i>
Feb 9 (T)	DUE TODAY: Editing PROJECT – Pictograms	
Feb 11 (R)	DUE TODAY: Pictograms PROJECT – Juxtapositions	
Feb 16 (T)	Continue working on Juxtapositions	<i>04 – Important Contemporary Graphic Novels</i>
Feb 18 (R)	DUE TODAY: Juxtapositions PROJECT – Beginning and End of the World	
Feb 23 (T)	Continue working on Beginning and End of the World	<i>05 – Comics in Other Countries</i>
Feb 25 (R)	DUE TODAY: Beginning and End of the World PROJECT – Four panel (plus four more)	
Mar 2 (T)	Continue working on Four Panels (plus four more)	
Mar 4 (R)	Due 15-minutes before class ends: Four Panels (plus four more) DUE TODAY: 30-daily comic strips	
SPRING BREAK (March 8-12)		
Mar 16 (T)	PROJECT – Six-nine panel strip	
Mar 18 (R)	Continue working on Six-nine panel strip	
Mar 23 (T)	DUE TODAY: Six-nine panel strip PROJECT – Childhood comic strip	
Mar 25 (R)	Continue working on Childhood	
Mar 30 (T)	DUE TODAY: Childhood comic strip PROJECT – Relationships	
Apr 1 (R)	Continue working on Relationships	
Apr 6 (T)	DUE TODAY: Relationships PROJECT – Color	
Apr 8 (R)	Continue working on Color	
Apr 13 (T)	DUE TODAY: Color Present your chosen graphic novel to the class Work on your final comic	
Apr 15 (R)	Work on your final comic	
Apr 20 (T)	Work on your final comic	
Apr 22 (R)	Work on your final comic	
Apr 27 (T)	Work on your final comic	
Monday, May 3, 8.30-10am	Your final comic is due at 9pm, the day BEFORE the exam. Share the digital file via email, Dropbox, Sharepoint, or by some other electronic means so we can see them during the exam period. If you miss the exam, your class grade will drop a letter grade.	

PROJECT DETAILS

Project 01 - Character Design

Build a life and character sheets for TWO characters for your final story.

Project Details

- Fully answer the *APPENDIX A: 20 Questions for Characters* sheet near the end of this document. These can live next to your drawings or be typed electronically.
- On an 11- x 8.5-inch document (portrait orientated letter-sized page) design two characters to be featured in one of your future projects. Each character should be shown in **side**, **front**, and **rear** view.
- Draw four face shots – happy, angry, surprised, shy.
- Save your design using the following file structure: **LASTNAME-FIRSTNAME-char_01.psd**
- When you completely finish, export your design as a PNG: **LASTNAME-FIRSTNAME-char_01.png**

Grading

You will be graded from 0-100% on this project. Grade breakdown:

- Character questionnaire x 2 (20%)
- Four expressions x 2 (20%)
- Two-character sheets, each with three views (30%)
- Overall effort (30%)

Submit the work no later than the start of class, the day of the deadline.

Graphic Novel Presentation

Read the assigned graphic novel and make a 12-point PowerPoint presentation talking about the ideas, art style, and any other critical information you feel important to share. Do NOT just talk about how much you liked or didn't like it. Instead, find reviews and interviews, summarize important information from them, and mix with large images from the story.

Project 02 - Daily comic strip

Use your sketchbook as a diary to create a four-panel strip. By the project deadline you should have 30 daily panels.

- Each panel should be roughly the same size.
- Use pencil and you can draw loosely but must draw CLEARLY
- Each panel should be black and white, and can use words.
- Aim not to be funny (unless it happens naturally). Take inspiration from life - observations, anecdotes, dreams, thoughts, etc.

Grading

You will be graded from 0-100% on this project. Grade breakdown:

- All 30 strips (60%)
- Effort (40%)

Submit the work no later than the start of class, the day of the deadline.

Final Project: Six-page story

The final project is to create a story - it can be fiction, non-fiction, biography, autobiography, journalism, or something else.

There are a number of ways to approach this. You might pencil and ink completely the first panel and then move onto the next, without any idea of what you will do from panel to panel. Or you could write out the story and then illustrate once you know what happens.

Alternatively, you can rough out the pages and thumbnail the story. Then come back and begin inking out each panel. This is probably the best approach as you can determine any composition and timing issues you may encounter.

Grading

You will be graded from 0-100% on this project. Grade breakdown:

- Minimum of six pages, each with a minimum of six panels (50%)
- Effort (50%)

Submit the work no later than the start of class, the day of the deadline.

Project 03 - Eyebrows

- In your sketchbook, draw a simple head in profile (eye and nose) and add an eyebrow.
- Create 100 heads with slight eyebrow variations. The eyebrow can be thick or thin, long or short, and placed above, below, or on either side.
- The point of this exercise is to show how slight variations in one line can convey very different meanings.

Submit the work no later than the start of class, the day of the deadline.

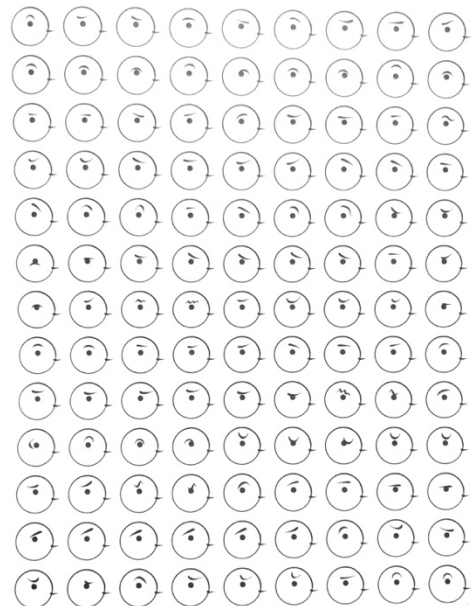


Figure 5. The "eyebrow-to-eyebrow" transition, an idea shamelessly stolen from Chris Ware.

EXERCISE: Car Cat Castle Self-portrait

This exercise is designed to help you draw without thinking and simplify your thoughts, creating the essence of what you're trying to render.

1. In your sketchbook, spend 3-minutes drawing a car (without reference).
2. Draw a car again in 2-minutes
3. Now 1-minute.
4. 30-seconds.
5. 15-seconds.
6. 5-seconds.
7. Repeat steps 1-6 for the following: a cat, castle, self-portrait

Project 04 - Three Single Panel comics

1. Using black and white, create three single panel comics, each unrelated to each other, with text at the bottom of each frame. The panels do not have to have text.
2. Each panel should be drawn as square that fits onto a letter-sized page (8.5- x 11-inches).
3. Choose a character or characters. Select a setting (e.g. on a boat, at the grocery store, library, on an airplane, in the jungle, in a cave, etc.).
4. You are not trying to be humorous but should take inspiration from everyday life. Try switching captions to play with the mood of each piece, if you have a caption.
5. Be simple and clear. Reduce your three panels so that they fit onto one letter-sized page. **MAKE SURE YOUR REDUCED PANELS READ WELL.** Redraw anything that gets lost or blurry when shrunk to a smaller size.

Project 05 - Editing

Show the following sequence of events using only pictures:

You wake up and realize you have overslept and are now late for class. You rush out of your home towards school only to discover that it's Sunday...

After you complete the first draft of this comic we will edit the story and then you will be able to add more panels to make the narrative work better.

Project Details

- Each image should be on its own 6" x 6" square drawn on 8.5" x 11" copier paper. Each image must be separate so that we can edit the sequence next class. You may want to number each panel.
- Finished artwork should be done with a Sharpie fine point marker.
- Color is NOT important.
- Stick figures (or Ivan Brunetti figures) are fine as long as the reader can discern what is happening in any given panel. This exercise is not about drawing; it is about storytelling. You may also use Ivan Brunetti's figures to create simple yet highly expressive characters.
- Minimum six panels. No maximum. This assignment is essentially a pantomime story that requires you to tell a simple (yet challenging) story using only pictures.

Challenges

- How do you convey the story without dialogue?
- What methods do you use to tell the protagonist is a student?
- How do you convey late and rush visually?
- In what way do you show that it's Sunday?

Project 06 - Pictograms

In your sketchbook, create a grid of 100 squares.

Spend no more than 10-seconds per drawing and draw whatever comes to mind.
Suggestions: people, places, objects, occupations, emotions, concepts. Etc.



Project 07 - Juxtapositions

On five half-size index cards (3.5 x 5), write the following:

1. Something you overheard in a public place
2. Something you said to someone earlier today
3. A slogan or catchphrase
4. A question
5. An interjection (a-ha! Excuse me! Etc.)

On seven full-size index cards, draw the following using NO words (spend 15-minutes total on your 7 drawings):

1. The funniest thing you can think of
2. The saddest thing in the world
3. Something abstract
4. Something scary
5. Something boring or mundane
6. Something you sad earlier today
7. Something from a dream.

Match the captions to find the funniest combinations of image and text.

Project 08 - Beginning and end of the world

Use 12 index cards to sketch out the following scenarios. Spend 3-4 minutes per card:

1. The beginning of the world
2. The end of the world
3. A self-portrait, including your entire body
4. Something that happened at breakfast time
5. An image from a recent dream
6. Something that happened between the beginning and the end of the world
7. What happened after that
8. Something that happened yesterday
9. Something that has yet to happen
10. Pick any of the previous panels and draw what happened immediately afterward
11. Draw a riff on the previous card, i.e. a different perspective, another character's viewpoint, something that happened off panel, a closeup or some detail of the drawing
12. Something that has nothing to do any of the previous panels

When finished, choose four panels and rearrange them to come up with a story. Keep playing with these until you have an interesting narrative.

Project 09 - Four panel strip (plus four more)

1. In your sketchbook, create a simple character out of simple shapes:

Circles, triangles, rectangles
2. Sketch the character in a range of poses - side, front, moving, at rest, etc.
3. Draw an object, item, thing, or prop.
4. Think of an action for your character.
5. Using four index cards, place your character in a location, performing that action, and be sure to incorporate the object you also drew. You should have four cards with your character doing something (again, ensure your object is included).
6. Don't change camera angles. Keep the view similar so that that your character, their actions, and the object are all clear.
7. No words may be used.
8. Now draw two more panels making the character's motivation clearer.
9. Draw two more showing the consequences of that character's actions



Ivan Brunetti

Grading

You will be graded from 0-100% on this project. Grade breakdown:

- Clarity of ideas (40%)
- Effort (60%)

Submit the work no later than the start of class, the day of the deadline.

Project 10 - Childhood

1. Create a grid of 12, 15, 16, or 24 equally-sized panels (you can draw larger but must reduce down to 8.5 x 11).
2. You are to create a strip about childhood. Try sketching out ideas or writing words in your sketchbook. Perhaps draw your old bedroom. What were mealtimes like? Did you have a favorite toy? What was your school like? The playground? Did you have friends you want to write about? Pets? Enemies?
3. Start with a strong memory and work from there.

Grading

You will be graded from 0-100% on this project. Grade breakdown:

- Clarity of visuals (30%)
- Quality of story (30%)
- Effort (40%)

Submit the work no later than the start of class, the day of the deadline.

Project 11 - Six-nine panel strip

1. In your sketchbook, make a 6-9 panel comic that fits onto one 8.5 x 11 page

2. Work in black and white, keep your panels the same size, and remember that you can work larger and reduce down to fit onto the assigned size
3. You do not have to tell a story that wraps up neatly (unless you want to). Instead, recreate a brief moment of life on the page.

Grading

You will be graded from 0-100% on this project. Grade breakdown:

- Strength of visuals (50%)
- Effort (50%)

Submit the work no later than the start of class, the day of the deadline.

12 - Relationships

1. Create a grid of 12, 15, 16, or 24 equally-sized panels (you can draw larger but must reduce down to 8.5 x 11).
2. Illustrate a story about a relationship. Maybe some point in a relationship, a crush, an anecdote about a relationship, your thoughts on love, etc. Use your own or a friend's experiences and observations.

Grading

You will be graded from 0-100% on this project. Grade breakdown:

- Quality of imagery (40%)
- Strength of story (40%)
- Effort (30%)

Submit the work no later than the start of class, the day of the deadline.

13 - Color

1. Using an absolute minimum of six panels and any panel sizes you wish, create a story about the seasons.
2. The final work should measure 11x17 or two pages, each 8.5x11.
3. You are welcome to use as many colors as you wish, but use your colors wisely.
4. Capture a mood, a time, a transformation. Choose one, two or all of the seasons.
5. If stuck, consider writing about today's weather. What is the sky like? What does it feel like outside? Is there a memory you associate with this time of year? Visualize it and run with your ideas.

Grading

You will be graded from 0-100% on this project. Grade breakdown:

- Use of color (20%)
- Quality of story (20%)
- Effort (30%)

Submit the work no later than the start of class, the day of the deadline.

APPENDIX A: 20 Questions for Characters

Physical description

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Sex:
4. Ethnicity:
5. Description of features and mannerisms:

Personal/professional history

6. Education:
7. Occupation:
8. Description of parents:
9. Description of upbringing/childhood:
10. Main relationships:
11. Type/intensity of religion, if any:

Personality

12. Basic personality traits (thoughtful, angry, goofy, etc.)
13. Shortcomings/weaknesses:
14. Strengths/special abilities:

What makes this character tick?

15. Driving motivation(s) or goals:

Interrogate your character

16. Dirty secret:
17. First love:
18. Favorite music and/or art:
19. Incident that created a scar, either physical or mental:
20. Describe a turning point in character's life:

OK, now sum this character up in a sentence or two. Include a sketchy physical description, mention qualities that work for and against him/her, and mention his/her main motivations.

Appendix B: List of Graphic Novels

Read the assigned graphic novel and make a 12-point PowerPoint presentation talking about the ideas, art style, and any other critical information you feel important to share. Do NOT just talk about how much you liked or didn't like it. Instead, find reviews and interviews, summarize important information from them, and mix with large images from the story.

- 1) Displacement - Lucy Knisley
- 2) Borb - Jason Little
- 3) Watchmen - Alan Moore
- 4) Maus - Art Spiegelman
- 5) Blankets - Craig Thompson
- 6) Batman year one - Frank Miller
- 7) V for vendetta - Alan Moore
- 8) Asterios Polyp - David Mazzucchelli
- 9) Ghost world - Daniel Clowes
- 10) Shortcomings - Adrian Tomine
- 11) Tin Tin (any title) - Herge
- 12) Hostage - Guy delisle?
- 13) Vincent - Barbara Stok
- 14) Wilson - Daniel Clowes
- 15) The photographer - Guibert. Lefevre. Lemerrier.
- 16) Drawn and Quarterly. 25 years of contemporary cartooning, comics...
- 17) Any of the Parker books - Darwyn Cooke
- 18) My friend Dahmer - Nerf Backderf
- 19) Trashed - Nerf Backderf
- 20) Palestine - Joe Sacco
- 21) Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea - Guy Delisle
- 22) Shenzhen - Guy Delisle
- 23) Jerusalem - Guy Delisle
- 24) Black Hole - Charles Burns
- 25) Jimmy Corrigan: the smartest kid on earth
- 26) Paying for it - Chester Brown