Margaret Galvan/LIT 4305: Comics Studies: A Cultural History of American Women in Comics: In Print & Online

In January 2016, the Angoulême International Comics Festival came under fire when its list of thirty nominees for the Grand Prix lifetime achievement award contained no female cartoonists. The festival apologized and amended its list following a large public outcry, since there are countless accomplished female cartoonists working today. However, this event is just one in a series of many over the years that deny female involvement in comics, despite a long cultural history of female creators, readers, and nuanced characters. Such denials have prompted scholars like Trina Robbins and Hillary Chute to write about these forgotten women. While they and others reposition women as central to the comics form, why are women overlooked again and again in this genre?

To grapple with this question, we will start by reading how comics have been variously defined. Reading these definitions alongside the texts about the forgotten women, we will ask: is there something about the definitions that exclude women in comics? Indeed, in their apology, Angoulême festival organizers suggest that there were not many women working in comics that were "true generational markers," echoing past statements that argued that women do not exist in this field because they have not produced work in a certain form or up to a certain standard. As a corrective, we will read comics by women in addition to reading comics for and about women, since female fandom and characters have also been minimized. We will read a variety of forms, both print and digital. Even before webcomics evolved alongside the Internet and e-readers allowed us to read print comics differently, comics—and especially comics by women—have always circulated in many forms. Through looking at and reading about comics on the Internet, we will consider how we might wield this digital space to right the balance.

Assignments:

Throughout the course, students will hone their analytical skills by composing a series of digital reflections on the course website and responding to the reflections of others. In some of these written reflections, students will analyze course materials by producing their own image-text creations made with digital comics and zine-making tools (i.e. Bitstrips, Comic Life, Issuu, etc.). Students will develop two of these reflections into formal essays.

For a longer research project, students will identify a female cartoonist whose legacy is not well-represented on Wikipedia. As a midterm assignment, students will put together an annotated bibliography and a proposal for how they will increase the digital visibility of this artist on Wikipedia, not only through writing more text on a dedicated page, but also through figuring out where else on Wikipedia this artist should be mentioned and linked. After approval of the midterm assignment, students will make the proposed changes to Wikipedia. In a final research paper, students will analyze this artist's work and legacy, comparing these elements to her reception in online spaces. Students will discuss how their own contributions and edits to Wikipedia shift this reception.

Class Visits: In addition to our course readings, we will schedule a few class visits to experience women's visual cultural production as preserved in archives and elsewhere.

Course Overview/Sample Readings:
Week 1: What is a comic? How do we "read" it?
Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, selections
Samuel Delany, "The Politics of Paraliterary Criticism." *Shorter Views.*
Samuel Delany, "Refractions of Empire." *Silent Interviews.*
Aaron Kashtan, "Materiality Comics" and the mostly male-authored & focused articles of *Digital Humanities Quarterly's* 9.4 issue on "Comics as Scholarship" (2015)

Week 2: Where are the women in comics? In print? Online?
Hillary Chute, "Introduction" to *Graphic Women* (2010)
Trina Robbins, selections from *Women and the Comics* (1985); *From Girls to Grrrlz* (1999); *The Great Women Cartoonists* (2001); *Pretty In Ink* (2013)

Week 3: Why doesn't Wonder Woman have her own film (yet)?
Trina Robbins, *The Great Women Superheroes* (1996), chapter on Wonder Woman
Wonder Woman: Annual 1989, selections from Trina Robbins & Lee Marrs
Wonder Woman, selections from Samuel Delany's, Phil Jimenez's run
Wonder Woman *Ms. Magazine* covers over the years
Noah Berlatsky, *Wonder Woman*, selections
Jill Lepore, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*, selections

Week 4: Civil Rights, Jackie Ormes, & Newspaper Comics
Goldstein, Nancy. *Jackie Ormes: The First African American Woman Cartoonist.* (2008)
Katharine Capshaw, *Civil Rights Childhood* (2014), selections

Week 5: Wikipedia, Women, & Comics
We will learn and practice the principles of how to edit Wikipedia. We will look at some other online spaces, including those listed below, where women in comics are well represented.
Women in Comics Wikia, http://womenincomics.wikia.com/wiki/Women_In_Comics_Wiki
Cartoonists of Color Database, http://marinaomi.com/poc/cocindex.html
Michelle Moravec, "If You Care About Women, You Should Edit Wikipedia Differently"
We will read the coverage of Wikipedia through the death of Wikipedian Adrianne Wadewitz, looking at articles by Cathy Davidson, FemTechNet, etc.

Week 6: The Women of the X-Men

We will read some of these comics through Marvel Comics' digital interface alongside reading physical copies.

Louise Simonson, *New Mutants*, select issues

Chris Claremont, *Kitty Pryde and Wolverine* #1-6

Ramzi Fawaz. "'Where No X-Man Has Gone Before!' Mutant Superheroes and the Cultural Politics of Popular Fantasy in Postwar America." *American Literature* 83.2 (2011): 355–388.

Ramzi Fawaz, *The New Mutants* (2016), selections

Margaret Galvan. "From Kitty to Cat: Kitty Pryde and the Phases of Feminism," *The Ages of The X-Men*. Ed. Joseph Darowski. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014.

Week 7: Roberta Gregory & Grassroots Spaces

You will read Gregory's comic both through the Alexander Street Press Underground & Independent Comics Database and through QZAP (http://www.qzap.org/); you will also read at least one other comic you find in these online spaces & be ready to discuss how these collections frame these works

Roberta Gregory, *Dynamite Damsels* (1976)

Margaret Galvan. "Feminism Underground: The Comics Rhetoric of Lee Marrs and Roberta Gregory," *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, The 1970s. Eds. Shelly Eversley and Michelle Habell-Pallán. 43.3-4 (2015).

Margaret Galvan. "Archiving Grassroots Comics: The Radicality of Networks & Lesbian Community," *Archive Journal*, Radical Archives. Eds. Lisa Darms and Kate Eichhorn. 5 (2015).

Week 8: The Hernandez Brothers, Female Readership, & Reprinting

We will look at the different sizes that *Love & Rockets* have been reproduced at in its various reprints.

Hernandez Brothers, *Love & Rockets* v. 1

Hernandez Brothers, *Locas* I & II, selections

Charles Hatfield, *Alternative Comics* (2005), selections

Frederick Luis Aldama, *Your Brain on Latino Comics* (2009), selections

Week 9: Zine Culture & Cristy C. Road

Cristy C. Road, *Spit and Passion* (2012)

Return to QZAP, engage the People of Color Zine Project (http://poczineproject.tumblr.com/), and find zines in these spaces in constellation with Road's work to discuss

Alison Piepmeier, *Girl Zines* (2009), selections

Alana Kumbier, *Ephemeral Material: Queering the Archive* (2014), chapter on QZAP

Week 10: Women's Comics & Social Justice

World War 3 Illustrated, selections from "Herstories" (1993) & other issues

Find comics to discuss in a single or multiple issues of *Heresies*,

http://heresiesfilmproject.org/archive/

Various *The Comics Journal* interviews with *WW3* creators, Seth Tobocman and Peter Kuper, selections

Week 11: Alison Bechdel & Online Communities

Alison Bechdel, *The Essential Dykes to Watch Out For* (2008), selections

We will read these same selections on her blog, looking at her comments to readers & how these entries fit alongside non-comics posts, http://dykestowatchoutfor.com/blog

Margaret Galvan, "Thinking through Thea: Alison Bechdel's Representations of Disability," in *Disability in Comic Books and Graphic Narratives* (2016)

Hillary Chute, *Graphic Women* (2010), chapter on Bechdel

Week 12: Lynda Barry & Teaching Comics

Lynda Barry, *Syllabus* (2014)

Lynda Barry, website where she posted the sections to *Syllabus* & continues to post, http://thenearsightedmonkey.tumblr.com/

Hillary Chute, *Graphic Women* (2010), chapter on Barry

Susan E. Kirtley, *Lynda Barry: Girlhood through the Looking Glass* (2012), selections

Week 13: From Webcomic to Book

Kate Beaton, *Hark! A Vagrant* (2011)

Kate Beaton, http://www.harkavagrant.com/ & http://beatonna.tumblr.com/

Kate Beaton, unpublished comics about her family on her websites

We will return to *Digital Humanities Quarterly's* 9.4 issue on "Comics as Scholarship" (2015)

Week 14

Final Presentations

Margaret Galvan/LIT 6308: Studies in Comics & Animation: Genealogies of Comics Studies

This course looks to the emergence of comics studies as a scholarly field of inquiry over the past 25+ years, beginning by tracing the field through formative thinkers (e.g. Samuel Delany, Will Eisner, Thierry Groensteen, Charles Hatfield, Marianne Hirsch, Scott McCloud, &c.) and anthologies. We will also take into consideration the rise of comics journals and comics imprints at academic presses and read through these spaces as well as special issues of journals devoted to comics. To understand where we are now and how future directions in the field connect to these foundations, we will turn to recent monographs that meditate on the state of comics studies. These texts may include: Hillary Chute, *Graphic Women* (2010); Bart Beaty, *Comics Versus Art* (2012); Jared Gardner, *Projections: Comics and the History of Twenty-First-Century Storytelling* (2012); Deborah Whaley, *Black Women in Sequence: Re-inking Comics, Graphic Novels, and Anime* (2015); MK Czerwiec, Susan Merrill Squier, et al, *Graphic Medicine Manifesto* (2015); Ramzi Fawaz, *The New Mutants: Superheroes and the Radical Imagination of American Comics* (2016); Tahneer Oksman, *"How Come Boys Get to Keep Their Noses?"* (2016); Christopher Pizzino, *Arresting Development: Comics at the Boundaries of Literature* (2016); Jonathan W. Gray, *Illustrating the Race: Representing Blackness in American Comics* (forthcoming). Throughout the semester, students will select and present on a recent monograph in the field and develop this presentation into a review essay for submission to a journal of their choosing. Students will also complete a 20-page seminar paper.

Margaret Galvan/HUM 6836: Digital Humanities Studio: Re-vision: Social Change & Visual Literature

This class seeks to untangle the revolutionary possibilities of the social movements of the 1960s-1980s and how they become inscribed into popular consciousness even fifty years later. For poet Adrienne Rich, participant in the feminist and queer social movements of the 1970s-1980s, feminism becomes a tool to "re-vise" the supposed tenets of reality embedded in society and writing alike. Other social movements contemporaneous to Rich also argue for new ways of seeing the accepted paradigms and, thereby, the self. How do these social movements revise history and get revised by it—as they're translated from manifesto into fiction, from Betty Friedan into *Mad Men*? Moreover, how do more recent social movements build from these earlier movements, creating new forms of visual culture through digital media tools?

The idea of re-vision that we trace through visual re-readings of social movements will also serve as the through-line for digital humanities assignments as we study these materials with different methods, including data visualizations, social network analysis, mapping, etc., that we will develop incrementally on a shared course website. Students will be encouraged to develop process-pieces about these assignments for publication in a venue like *The Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy* or *The Programming Historian*. We will also develop archival research methods through encounters with visual social movement culture in university archives and local spaces like the Civic Media Center and Wild Iris Books as well as in digital archives like the Queer Zine Archive Project, the People of Color Zine Project, Chicana Por Mi Raza, and Independent Voices. For a final project, students will compose a 15-20 page grant proposal for a new digital project, building off of the archival and digital methods developed throughout the course. The format of the proposal, which will outline the planning or initial stages of a digital humanities project, is based on the NEH Digital Humanities Start Up Grants. As an alternative, students may compose a 15-20 page seminar paper that integrates digital research tools and builds off of course readings, with the goal of revising and submitting the piece to a journal of their choosing.

With an emphasis on visual re-readings of social movements, texts may include: Ho Che Anderson's *King: A Comics Biography*; Gloria Anzaldúa; John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, & Nate Powell's *March*; James Baldwin; Kate Beaton; Alison Bechdel; Katharine Capshaw; Hillary Chute; Molly Crabapple; Ann Cvetkovich; Angela Davis; Stephen Duncombe; Kate Eichhorn; Ramzi Fawaz; *Gay Comix*, Jen Jack Gieseking; Sandra M. Gilbert & Susan Gubar; Gran Fury; *Heresies*; Catherine D'Ignazio; Lauren Klein; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Audre Lorde; Cherríe Moraga; Michelle Moravec; Linda Nochlin; Alison Piepmeier; Adrienne Rich; *Tits & Clits*, *Wimmen's Comix*; *World War 3 Illustrated*.