

GRADLIS 9312L 001: EXPLORING & UNDERSTANDING COMICS IN LIBRARIES  
MLIS Program, Faculty of Information & Media Studies  
Western University Summer 2020

*I would like to begin this academic term and course by acknowledging that the land on which the institution that offers this course sits on the traditional land of the Attawandaran, and now the Chippewa, Oneida, and Munsee Nations. I am also teaching this course from the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishanaabe. To say that is to acknowledge a debt to those who were here before us and to recognize our responsibility, as guests, to respect and honour the intimate relationship Indigenous peoples have to this land. As a settler in Turtle Island, I directly benefit from the colonization and genocide of the indigenous people of this land. I am grateful to have the opportunity to exist on this land and we must constantly engage in acts of decolonization.*

## 1. COURSE INFORMATION

---

**Timeline:** Online May 11 – August 13

**Meeting Time:** Synchronous and Asynchronous - (see the Course Breakdown for exact dates/times)

**Class Location:** Online via OWL

**Meeting Location:** Online via Zoom

**Active Time Zone:** EST (Eastern Standard Time)

## 2. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

---

**Instructor:** Dr. Lucia Cedeira Serantes, Assistant Professor (LD)

**Website:** [https://www.fims.uwo.ca/people/profiles/lucia\\_cedeira\\_serantes.html](https://www.fims.uwo.ca/people/profiles/lucia_cedeira_serantes.html)

**Email:** lcedeir@uwo.ca. Please add the **course number 9312** to the Subject of ALL your emails.

**Office hours:** By appointment via Zoom (meetings should be requested 48hrs in advance). During the weeks without meetings, I will also offer drop-in meetings.

**Use of Zoom:** For any course meetings with the instructor and/or guest speakers, we will use [Zoom through UWO](#). If you have any questions about your privacy or data, you may read [this section](#).

## 3. COURSE DESCRIPTION

---

The goal of this course is to introduce students to comics within the framework of their potential use in libraries. Therefore, the scholarly study and professional evaluation of comics will be a major component of the course. The selected works will attempt to represent major trends, creators, and publishers and, although we will focus on the North American market, we will also discuss the European and Asian markets. We will evaluate these materials, reflect about emerging issues and their role in the context of different information environments: public, school, and academic libraries.

### Course Objectives

1. To understand and evaluate comics as a unique, diverse and multimodal medium of communication and storytelling.
2. To determine the similarities and differences between the past and present place of comics in North American culture as well as in other notable comics cultures worldwide.
3. To evaluate and help improve current and future comics collections for diverse communities.

- To responsively contribute to the increasing number of comics-focused services and programs developed by different libraries.

### Course-Level Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of readings, assignments, and class participation, students will be able to:

- Situate and understand the past and present of comics as reading material, their readers, and their place in different information environments (program level learning outcomes 1, 5);
- Recognize the extensive and diverse production of graphic materials, especially major publishing markets, specific canonical and popular works, and key authors (program level learning outcome 8);
- Select and evaluate comics that specifically connect with a library's community and mission (program level learning outcome 3);
- Critically reflect on the qualities and benefits of the form in light of the frequent challenges and stereotypes about these materials (program level learning outcomes 3, 5).

### Course breakdown (tentative)

	Topic/s	Dates	Engagement and Projects
Module 1	<i>Introduction to the course</i>	May 10- May 24 Meeting: May 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction post</li> <li>Familiarize with course requirements and organization</li> </ul>
Module 2	<i>Topic: Comics medium Genre: Modern classics</i>	May 25 – June 7 Meeting: June 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion lead and meeting preparation</li> <li>Analysis of a comics page (individual)</li> </ul>
Module 3	<i>Topic: Comics history and worldwide reach Genre: International comics</i>	June 8 -June 21 Meeting: June 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion lead and meeting preparation</li> </ul>
Module 4	<i>Topic: Readership and production Genre: Canadian comics</i>	June 22- July 12 Meeting: July 6  <i>(Includes Reading week June 28-July 2)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion lead and meeting preparation</li> <li>Proposal for M6 project</li> <li>Choice of one project (individual): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Factsheet of comics history around the world</li> <li>- Factsheet of a comics publisher you do not know</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Module 5	<i>Topic: Comics and libraries I Genre: NonFiction Comics</i>	July 13- July 26 Meeting: July 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion lead and meeting preparation</li> <li>Response to Comics Naysayers (pair)</li> </ul>
Module 6	<i>Topic: Comics and libraries II Genre: Comics for Youth</i>	July 27-August 13 Meeting: August 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion lead and meeting preparation</li> <li>Creative Digital Project (trio or pair)</li> </ul>

- For the purpose of the meetings, the course will be divided into two groups. Students will sign up for one of two meeting groups and they will be expected to attend to the corresponding meeting time. *This organization might change based on course enrollment:*
  - Group 1: 10am-11:15am
  - Group 2: 11:30am-12:45pm
- Each Module takes two weeks. During that Module you are expected to work on the lecture and readings and prepare to contribute to the Module meeting. When you are a Discussion Lead, you will

need to publish a post before the meeting with discussion prompts and manage a breakout room during the meeting (*more details to come*).

#### 4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

---

- I understand that the Covid-19 crisis has provoked or exacerbated different expectations in our lives. If you require any accommodation before or during the course, please contact [FIMS Graduate Student Services](#) or Brandi Borman, ([bborman@uwo.ca](mailto:bborman@uwo.ca), Ext. 88494.)
- The course is structured as a learning experience that combines elements of ***asynchronous and synchronous learning***. Because of this design, you will be expected to read and consult resources without being prompted by the instructor as well as expected to participate on the Module meetings.
- ***Learning is a communal endeavor*** and creating and sustaining community will certainly also be part of your profession. To support this learning experience, ***attendance to the meetings is mandatory*** and your responsibility to actively participate in class. Your active involvement in the discussions is linked to your success in this course. ***Because summaries of the readings are not required on every module***, in-meeting participation is the main way I have to regularly hear about your position and thinking regarding the reading selections for each Module.
- Although I will lead the discussion and you will have the opportunity to lead one discussion, ***I recommend you that you come to each meeting with a plan to participate***: a question, an observation, a connection, or other comment about the readings that you might offer at an appropriate moment in the class discussion. You will have opportunities to participate or respond/build up on other student's engagement during breakout room discussions and general discussions. You will be evaluated not merely on the frequency of your contributions but more so on their quality. A well thought out question is more impressive than a mere statement of fact. ***The expectation of frequent and substantive participation should not be understood as an invitation to speak at every opportunity***. You need to be aware and acknowledge the context of your participation within the group. Likewise, not contributing at all or speaking only when prompted by the instructor will be evaluated accordingly.
- Students should expect to ***spend approximately 10-12 hours per week*** on preparation, (including assigned reading, research, course engagement) and assignments. ***Online learning both needs and takes time***, so students should try to plan accordingly as much as they can. If you would like some advice about how to organize yourself, you may want to check [this resource about how to get ready to learn online](#).
- ***Grading*** follows the [MLIS Grading System](#), available on the FIMS intranet for consultation.

#### 5. COURSE MATERIALS

---

- There will be two reading lists: the Primary Materials (comics readings) and Scholarly/Professional Readings. The required Scholarly/Professional Readings will be available through OWL or through Western Libraries.
- For the Primary Materials, the FIMS Graduate Library has worked in collaboration with London Public Library to facilitate MLIS students' access to their digital collections. More information about how to use this access is provided in the FIMS Graduate Library in the [Resource/FIMS Databases section](#). The instructor will make sure that comic readings are available through LPL, but students are highly encouraged to explore how to access digital collections via their local public libraries.
- Under the current circumstances, accessibility to materials could be an issue:

- Check the different ways the [UWO collections can be accessed](#) (including digital delivery under Print Collections),
- Check the different ways the [FIMS Grad Library](#) can support you, and
- Contact your instructor as soon as possible if you cannot access a material that you consider essential for your learning experience or project development.
- **Required applications:** Proficiency using OWL and Zoom is expected for you to participate successfully in this course. We will use [Zoom through UWO](#) for Meetings and for Office Hours. This is a web-conferencing application that allows for audio, video, chat and desktop sharing. If you have any questions about your privacy or data, you may read [this section](#). Other technologies might be necessary to complete certain aspects of the course, but the instructor will offer guidance and resources to support the students' learning experience.

## 6. METHODS OF EVALUATION (TENTATIVE)

---

To complete this course, you must complete the following work:

Projects	Weight	Due Dates
Course engagement: - One discussion lead about scholarly/professional readings - Presence, preparation and engagement in meetings - Exercises and posts related to or in preparation for meetings	15%	Throughout term
Analysis of a comics page (individual project)	15%	M2
Proposal for Module 6 project (trio or pair project)	10%	M4
Choice of individual project: - Factsheet of comics history around the world - Factsheet of a comics publisher (that you do not know)	15%	M4
Response to Comics Naysayers (pair project)	20%	M5
Digital creative project (trio or pair project)	25%	M6

## 7. STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC OFFENCES

---

Academic Offences - Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence at the following website: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

See also the [section on Appeals and Discipline in the FIMS website](#).

## 8. SUPPORT SERVICES

---

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Western's "Health and Wellness" at [https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/index.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Also, you may consult the [Resources section](#) in the FIMS Intranet. For Western updates on Covid-19, you may consult [this webpage](#) created specifically for students.