

LIS 9312 Comics in Libraries
Master of Library and Information Science Program
Faculty of Information and Media Studies
The University of Western Ontario
Winter 2024

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 is located on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Chonnonton Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. 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

Time: Tuesdays, 1:30pm-4:20pm January 08 – April 12, 2023

Class Location: FNB 3220

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Master of Library and Information Science.

2. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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

Email: For general course communication **use the OWL message system**. If you need to contact me with an urgent matter, use lcedeir@uwo.ca and add the **course number 9312** and URGENT to the Subject.

- Allow for 48hrs for any response.
- Note that I do not check communication over weekends, so plan accordingly.

Office hours: Office FNB 4050, on Tuesday 12pm-1pm. Possibility of Zoom appointments, if requested 48hrs in advance.

Instructor's website: https://www.fims.uwo.ca/people/profiles/lucia_cedeira_serantes.html

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 study and 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 comics market and culture, we will also discuss the European and Asian comics markets and cultures. 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 format

This course is designed for in-person delivery, with occasional online instruction or modules. Attendance is mandatory and students are expected to be familiar with the course requirements.

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.
4. 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:

1. 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);
2. 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);
3. Select and evaluate comics that specifically connect with a library's community and mission (program level learning outcome 3);
4. 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).

4. COURSE MATERIALS

There will be two reading lists for this course: the Primary Materials (comics works) and the readings that provide scholarly and/or professional information and context to the course:

- The required Scholarly/Professional Readings will be available through OWL or through Western Libraries.
- For the Primary Materials students are encouraged to explore their local public libraries and use their access to print and digital collections. If there are texts not available in your area and you do not live in London, 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](#). For any material that is difficult to access, the instructor will attempt to make copies available through the FIMS Graduate Library. The sooner you communicate any difficulty of accessing the titles, the easier will be for the instructor to help with any issues.

5. COURSE EXPECTATIONS

- **Pedagogical approach:** Students should prepare to *spend approximately 10-12 hours per week* on reading, group work, class exercises, course assignments, and viewing and listening to resources. Learning both needs and takes time, so students should try to plan accordingly as much as they can. The course considers learning *as a communal endeavor*; individual preparation is a way of contributing to create and sustain a professional community that will certainly also be part of your profession. Therefore, your active participation in the course will be welcomed and encouraged, so we can all also learn from each other. Course preparation and engagement is crucial, and we will work on exercises and

discussions during class time. Coming to class having read the materials and prepared with notes is crucial for your participation and the development of a rich learning community.

- o **Coursework evaluation** follows the [MLIS Grading System](#), available on the FIMS intranet for consultation. During the term this course will use a qualitative marking system that will consider the progression of the student, based on the following equivalences:

100-90 A+	79-77 B+	69-67 C+
89-85 A	73-70 B-	66-64 C
84-80 A-	76-74 B	

6. COURSE POLICIES

Assignment submission - format:

- o Follow the guidelines indicated for in the instructions for each assignment.
- o The file naming protocol follows the following guidelines: Last Name/s_Assignment Name.pdf.
- o Unless indicating different in the assignment instructions, submit as a single pdf document.
- o Do not use a cover page, but be sure to include your name, the course name, assignment title at the top of the first page. Use page numbers, 12-point font.
- o Word limits will be strictly observed.

Assignment submission - late: I will not apply any late penalties to assignments submitted 3 days after the posted due date. HOWEVER, please note the following:

- o I will not accept any late assignments submitted 3 days after the posted due date. These assignments will not be read and will receive a zero grade.
- o I will not provide written feedback on assignments that are submitted late. You will receive a grade only. This holds for assignments submitted 10 minutes late or 3 days late.
- o I will not receive requests for extensions except on documented medical or compassionate grounds. Please do NOT forward documentation. Documentation for reasons for accommodating late submissions are private and confidential and do not need to be shared with me; any situation or information needs to be shared with the **Graduate Student Services** at FIMS.
- o If you find you are struggling to complete your assignments for this course in a timely way, I encourage you to contact me so that we can meet to discuss strategies that might help.

Group/Pair work: In this course, you will work on groups for different exercises and assignments. If you are apprehensive about working in pairs or groups, especially remotely, or you need general advice about this topic, I highly encourage you to read the following article: Bernier, A., & Stenstrom, C. (2016). Moving from chance and “chemistry” to skills: Improving online student learning outcomes in small group collaboration. *Education for Information*, 32, 55–69. <https://doi.org/10.3233/EFI-150960>

Sharing of Course Materials: Materials are presented in an educational context for personal use and study and should not be shared, distributed, or sold in print—or digitally—outside the course without permission. I do not authorize you to upload course materials (slides, exercises, etc.) to sharing websites.

Generative AI tools for this course are not encouraged for use for your assignments. We hope that you will take the opportunity to develop and refine your research, writing, and critical thinking skills without assistance from tools and programs that are known to be inaccurate, biased, and complicit in advancing social harms by

supporting prediction models to influence human behaviour. You have seen studied these problems in your core courses and other MLIS electives, depending on your academic/professional interests. However, should you decide to use Generative AI tools for your assignments, please be aware of the following requirements:

- Students must properly and fully cite the use of Generative AI. This includes in-text citation as well. See [this very useful help sheet](#) from The University of Waterloo Libraries.
- For your submission, you are expected to have significantly revised the original output.
- You will be responsible for any inaccurate, biased, offensive, or otherwise unethical content you submit regardless of whether it originally came from you or an AI model.
- In an appendix, you must also include the following:
 1. Prompts and follow-up questions/prompts
 2. A detailed statement that describes how Generative AI was used for the assignment.
 3. a reflection on what you learned through using the Generative AI model.

I am using the honour system to trust that if you use Generative AI tools to assist you in your work for this course, that you will disclose that use and follow the stated course policies. Failure to describe your use of Generative AI tools fully and transparently for your assignments could result in failure of the assignment, being asked to re-do the assignment, an oral defense of the assignment, and/or failure of the course. Violations of this course policy are covered under Western’s academic integrity and scholastic offenses and FIMS policy about Academic Offences in the MLIS Graduate Student Handbook.

If you would like assistance with your research, writing, and citation practices for your assignments, you are encouraged to take advantage of learning opportunities offered by the Writing Support Centre at Western, as well as relevant workshops and programs offered by the FIMS Graduate Library and Western Libraries.

7. COURSE TIMELINE (TENTATIVE) Dates might change due to guest lectures/site visits.

8.		Topics	Main coursework
1	01/09	Our stories with comics <i>Topic: Situating comics in media history</i>	<i>Course introduction. During this week, explore the course organization and schedule. Sign up for Lightning Talks. Questions about the Library and bookstore visit exercise</i>
2	01/16	<i>Topic: Graphic storytelling</i> Comics: Modern Classics	
3	01/23	<i>Topic: a history of comics (and libraries)</i> Guest lecture: Amie Wright	Due: [3] Library and bookstore visit (20%)
4	01/30	<i>Topic: Readership and production</i>	Due: [2] Lightning Talks (x2)

		Comics: Beyond Batman vs. Spiderman - New approaches to capes and tights	
5	02/06	Topic: Canadian comics Comics: Comics and everyday life	Due: [2] Lightning Talks (x2) Due: [3] Pairs sign up and choice of library collection by email to the instructor
6	02/13	Topic: Comics in libraries I Comics: Escaping to other worlds: Fantasy and bits of sci-fi and horror	Due: [2] Lightning Talks (x2) Due: Choice of topic and trios for Basics of... exercise (in class)
READING WEEK (Feb 19-23)			
7	02/27	Topic: Comics in libraries II Comics: Non-fiction comics I	Due: [2] Lightning Talks (x2) Due: [1] Response to Comics Naysayers
8	03/05	Topic: Comics in libraries II [Visit to the Collection at Weldon Special Collections; tentative]	Due: [1] Discussion of Basics of... exercise
9	03/12	Topic and Comics: Non-fiction comics II	Due: [2] Lightning Talks (x2)
10	03/19	Topic and Comics: Bande dessinée, historietas, tegneserier, fumetti...	Due: [3] Will Eisner Grant application (25%)
11	03/26	Topic and Comics: Manga, manhwa, and other East Asia publishing markets	Due: [2] Lightning Talks (x2)
12	04/02	Topic and Comics: A publishers' explosion – Comics for youth	Due: [2] Lightning Talks (x2)
13	04/09	Grant presentations	Due: [3] Grant presentation (10%)
<p>Toronto Comics Arts Festival May 11-12, 2024 Free Comic Book Day May 4, 2024 (Worldwide) Vancouver Comic Arts Festival May 18 & 19 2024 Montreal Comics Arts Festival May 24- 26, 2024</p>			

8. METHODS OF EVALUATION (TENTATIVE DATES)

Work	Description and due dates	Weight
[1] Preparation and engagement Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class presence is mandatory. Active course participation. Preparation and engagement with course materials, instructor exercises, and other participants' contributions Two in-class exercises that require preparation and show course knowledge and engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response to Naysayers exercise Basics of... exercise Other expectations for engagement will be made available in OWL. <p>Due date: Ongoing</p>	25%
[2] Choice of Individual Project - Lightning Talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factsheet of comics history around the world Factsheet of a comics publisher (that you do not know) <p>Due date: Ongoing. The presentation is due in-class the week you sign up for. The factsheet document is due on OWL on the Monday of the week you present, by noon.</p>	20%
[3] Grant application: Collection Visit, Report, and Presentation Individual and pairs	<p>Four requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Collection Visit - Week 3 (individual) (20%) Organize in pairs and choose a comics library collection - Week 6 Will Eisner Grant application – Week 10 (pairs) (25%) Presentation: Grant presentation – Week 13 (10%) <p>Due date: Week 3 (01/23), Week 5 (02/26), Week 10 (03/19), and Week 13 (in class)</p>	20%+25% +10% (55%)

9. 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

Students in this class are reminded that plagiarism – using another's work, ideas, or words without giving credit -- is a serious scholastic offence. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence to create content that is submitted as one's own. See the Course Policies for specifics.

See also the section on [Academic Offences in the MLIS Student Handbook](#).

10. SUPPORT SERVICES

Health and Wellness Support Services: Students who are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness at Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Also see the Mental Health and Wellness Resource Guide for additional information: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/MHWRG2018.pdf>

Accessible Education Western (AEW): Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with **Accessible Education Western (AEW)**, a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both **AEW** and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction. At FIMS, if you need any guidance with AEW, contact Chris Circelli, FIMS Graduate Student Services (ccircel@uwo.ca).

Indigenous Student Centre: For culturally relevant, wholistic and strength-based programs and services geared toward Indigenous students at Western. See also, [Indigenous Initiatives at Western](#).

FIMS Graduate Library: For help with research in FIMS graduate programs, consult with the FGL staff.