

**English 149: Networked and Multimodal Composition-The Transmedia Batman  
Spring 2015**

**Instructor: Ben Bolling**

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**Classroom: Greenlaw 317**

**Class Meeting Time: T, Th 3:30 PM-4:45 PM**

**Office: Greenlaw 311**

**Office Hours: T, Th 2:00 PM- 3:30 PM and by appointment**

**Course Introduction:**

In “ENGL 149: Networked and Multimodal Composition,” we will explore multimodal composition through critical analysis of the relationships among icons, text, images, and sounds. Using contemporary, networked spaces, the course will build multimedia composition skills to address familiar rhetorical concerns. To coincide with the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Batman as a transmedia construct, we will ground the course in an ongoing analysis of the Dark Knight’s resonance across the boundaries of popular media. We will examine how medium, form, and genre function to shape texts while building proficiency in effective multimodal communication. Throughout the term, you will hone your abilities through original, student-driven projects. The ultimate aim of this course is to provide you with the composition and communication skills necessary to confidently assert yourselves as the next generation of scholars and professionals representing the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**Course Objectives:**

- Understand genres, conventions, and form as they relate to multimodal composition;
- Generate multimodal compositions in various forms;
- Conduct research using online databases and library sources;
- Create original multimedia content by working productively with a group
- Review and revise your own work and assist others in revising their work.

**Required Materials:**

- *The Dark Knight Returns*, Frank Miller and Klaus Janson
- *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud
- *Batman: Year One*, Miller, Mazzucchelli, Lewis, et al.
- *Save the Cat*, Blake Snyder

*All other required materials will be available via Sakai or through UNC’s Media Resource Center in the Undergraduate Library.*

**Recommended Materials:**

We will be working with Adobe Creative Cloud applications throughout the term. You should be able to access this software in some UNC computer labs. However, consider the student subscription to Creative Cloud Complete for the duration of the semester:

[http://www.adobe.com/creativecloud/buy/students.html?sdid=KKTHX&skwcid=AL!3085!3!57438660862!b!!g!!student%20creative%20cloud%20download&ef\\_id=VKxRKAAAUAfc02x:20150106211832:s](http://www.adobe.com/creativecloud/buy/students.html?sdid=KKTHX&skwcid=AL!3085!3!57438660862!b!!g!!student%20creative%20cloud%20download&ef_id=VKxRKAAAUAfc02x:20150106211832:s)

**Course Overview:** I have organized “ENGL 149: Networked and Multimodal Composition” according to the following principles:

**Workshop format:** In order to explore a range of discourse communities, cultivate varied communication skills, and maximize our knowledge of composition methods and resources, our class will function as a supportive community of scholars. Each of you will be assigned to workshop and production groups. Your groups will provide feedback on your compositions, serve as discussion partners, and act as smaller cohorts in the larger community. My instruction will emphasize process: how to read, compose, analyze, and interpret a range of multimedia texts. Your compositions will be our primary texts and your constructive engagement in the work of your colleagues will prove integral to our communal development. You will receive valuable feedback from your peers and, in turn, will build skills in critical analysis, managing group dynamics, and collaborative composition.

**Computers:** You will be required to use computers to conduct activities in this course, so I ask that you bring your laptops to class *every day*. Allow time and seek assistance for any technical issues that arise when completing computer-based activities (information and technical assistance are available at <http://help.unc.edu> or by phone at 962-HELP). You should observe appropriate behavior during all computer-based activities related to this class. Engaging in activities deemed to be offensive or inappropriate may be considered violations of the UNC Honor Code.

**Sakai:** Sakai is a web-based instructional environment that will provide our digital home for this semester. Here, you will find the course syllabus, assignments, notes, reading materials, resources, and important announcements/reminders. To sign into Sakai, go to: <https://www.unc.edu/sakai/>. Your username and password are your university Onyen and password. Please make sure that you are comfortable with Sakai’s setup and functionality. Don’t be afraid to ask for help with any Sakai-related issues. Discomfort/confusion are not valid excuses for failure to complete an assignment on time.

**Professionalism:** Professionalism for “Networked and Multimodal Composition” has five components – Community, Responsibility, Respect, Communication, and Collegiality—explained broadly below:

- **Community:** Because this discussion-based class depends on the input of all class members, your professionalism will be evaluated in part by your peers via group evaluation reports

- **Academic Etiquette:** Tolerance for diverse opinions voiced in class and online is essential. In order for us to learn from one another, we have to allow each other to make mistakes, and/or to offer unpopular positions for debate.
- **Cell Phones:** Before class begins, please turn your cell phones off. If your phone rings or if you send texts during class, I will make every possible effort to embarrass you.
- **E-mail:** E-mail is the easiest and most convenient way to contact me. My e-mail address is listed on the front of the syllabus. If you e-mail me during my office hours, I will usually respond immediately, unless I am with a student. **Otherwise, I will respond within 24 hours during the school week (M-F). Please do not e-mail a question about an assignment due in fewer than 24 hours. In all other cases, if you do not receive a response within 24 hours during the school week, please re-send the message.**
- **Attendance:** Because this class is a workshop, your attendance, preparedness, and active participation are integral to our success. **Attendance is mandatory.** Each absence beyond three (3) will result in a reduction of your final grade by one-third (1/3) letter grade (e.g. a B becomes a B-, a B- becomes a C+, etc.). Seven or more absences will result in automatic failure of the class in accordance with UNC-CH policy. Incompletes will not be given.
- **Preparedness:** Tardiness disrupts the workshop environment and is disrespectful of your colleagues and me. Repeated or excessive tardiness may be counted as an absence, so please arrive on time. If you come to class without a draft on a scheduled workshop day, you will be considered absent. Failure to complete projects on time will adversely affect your grade. I do not accept late assignments.
- **Conferences:** My office hours are listed on the first page of this syllabus. Please see me during my regularly scheduled office hours if you have any questions, if you are struggling with an assignment, or if you simply would like to chat. You do not need an appointment to stop by during office hours, although those who have an appointment will receive priority. If my office hours are not convenient for you, let me know and we will arrange another mutually convenient time to meet.

**Evaluation:**

Your grade in this course will be assigned based on your performance in the following areas:

Video Presentations	15%
Midterm Podcast	15%
Marketing Assignment	10%
Networking/Pitching Assignment	10%
Final Project	15%
Final Portfolio	15%
Participation	20%

I will calculate your final grade according to the following scale:

<b>A</b>	95-100%	<b>C+</b>	77-79%
<b>A-</b>	90-94%	<b>C</b>	73-76%
<b>B+</b>	87-89%	<b>C-</b>	70-72%
<b>B</b>	83-86%	<b>D</b>	60-69%
<b>B-</b>	80-82%	<b>F</b>	0%

Each area of evaluation will be detailed in assignment descriptions and rubrics available via Sakai. The “Participation” component of

your grade includes, but is not limited to: constructive contributions to class discussions and activities, engagement with and support of workshop group members, quizzes, and timely completion of reading, online projects, and homework assignments.

**Plagiarism and the Honor Code:** Plagiarism is a very serious Honor Code violation as it is a breach of the academic community's trust. Every piece of work you produce in this class must be your own. You are bound by the Honor Code in all that you do at this University, and so am I. I take that responsibility very seriously. I am required to report any work I believe may be plagiarized. Handing in work that is not your own not only violates the Honor Code, it also ruins the trust between us. If I find you have plagiarized in my course, I will fail you on the assignment – no exceptions – and I will seek additional penalties from the Honor Court. If you are struggling with an assignment, please speak to me. If you are struggling with your time management, please speak to me.

Please speak to me if you have any questions. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for breaching the Honor Code. And please remember: this policy applies to drafts as well as final products.

#### **Honor Code**

The Honor Code is in effect in this class and all others at the University. I am committed to treating Honor Code violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at <http://instrument.unc.edu>.

Under the Honor Code provisions, you have four general responsibilities:

- Obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code.
- Refrain from lying, cheating or stealing.
- Conduct yourself so as not to impair significantly the welfare or the educational opportunities of others in the University community.
- Refrain from conduct that impairs or may impair the capacity of University and associated personnel to perform their duties, manage resources, protect the safety and welfare of members of the University community, and maintain the integrity of the University.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-administered honor system and judicial system for over 100 years. The system is the responsibility of students and is regulated and governed by them, but faculty share the responsibility. If you have questions about your responsibility under the honor code, please bring them to your instructor or consult with the office of the Dean of Students or the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. This document, adopted by the Chancellor, the Faculty Council, and the Student Congress, contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. Your full participation and observance of the honor code is expected.

Please submit all written work with the following signed pledge: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment.”

**Non-Discrimination:** This University does not discriminate against its students or employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability. In this class we will strive to maintain an open atmosphere with shared respect for all differences.

**Accessibility:** The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ensures that no qualified person shall by reason of a disability be denied access to, participation in, or the benefits of, any program or activity operated by the University. In compliance with UNC policy and federal law, qualified students with disabilities are eligible to receive “reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to education opportunities, programs, and activities” (<https://accessibility.unc.edu/faculty>). If you anticipate such accommodations, please notify me as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Additionally, you may seek out student support services at the Department of Accessibility Resources and Service (<https://accessibility.unc.edu/>) or through the Learning Center (<http://learningcenter.unc.edu/>).

**The Writing Center:** The UNC Writing Center is an excellent resource if you would like to pursue additional help with your composition outside of class. In either face-to-face or online sessions, tutors will help you at any stage in your composition process. Tutors will not revise, edit, or proofread your work for you. However, they will help you organize your work, think through your ideas, and improve your arguments. For more information about the writing center or to schedule an appointment, visit their website at <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/>.

**My pledge to you:**

I will be available for you as much as possible. I will strive to make this class engaging and intellectually stimulating, and your feedback will always be welcomed. Additionally, please communicate to me any extenuating circumstances and I will do my best to accommodate your needs. This classroom should be a welcoming environment that provides everyone with an equal opportunity for learning. I want you to let me know what I can do to ensure that it is, in fact, such a place. As stated above, my ultimate goal is to provide you with the composition and communication skills necessary to confidently assert yourselves as the next generation of scholars and professionals representing the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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**Your pledge to me:**

By signing below, I indicate that I have read and understood the above requirements. I agree to abide by these requirements.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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On the course calendar below, I've listed important due dates and reading assignments. Be advised, however, that homework, additional reading, and other assignments may be added or adjusted throughout the term. Be sure to check Sakai announcements often and to see a classmate for updates if you are absent. Also, listen carefully in class for announced changes and check the calendar for updates.

**Any reading assignment should be completed before class on the day it is listed.**

**Course Calendar  
Spring 2015**

**Week 1**

Th 1/8  
Introductions  
Course Overview  
Discussion: Symbols

**Week 2**

T 1/13  
Discussion: Semiotics  
READING: *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, Chapter 1, Umberto Eco (Available via Sakai)

Th 1/15  
Discussion: Medium, Form, and Genre  
READING: *The Dark Knight Returns*, Frank Miller and Klaus Janson (through the end of "Book 2")  
WORKSHOP: Adobe Creative Cloud Design Tools

**Week 3**

T 1/20  
READING: *The Dark Knight Returns*, Frank Miller and Klaus Janson (complete the graphic novel)  
WORKSHOP: Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop)

Th 1/22  
READING: *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud (through the end of Chapter 4)  
WORKSHOP: Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop)

**Week 4**

T 1/27  
READING: *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud (complete the book)  
WORKSHOP: Garageband

Th 1/29                      READING: *Batman: Year One*, Miller, Mazzucchelli, Lewis, et al.  
(through the end of Chapter 2)  
WORKSHOP: iMovie

**Week 5**

T 2/3                         READING: *Batman: Year One*, Miller, Mazzucchelli, Lewis, et al.  
(complete the graphic novel)  
WORKSHOP: iMovie

Th 2/5                      VIDEO PRESENTATIONS: TALES OF THE BAT

**Week 6**

T 2/10                      VIDEO PRESENTATIONS: TALES OF THE BAT

Th 2/12                    VIEWING: *The Dark Knight*, (dir. Christopher Nolan)  
READING: 75 Years of Batman (available via Sakai)

- “Batman 2014: The 100/75/50/25 Anniversaries,” Michael Uslan
- “The Legend of Bill Finger: Who He Is and How Batman Came to Be,” Marc Tyler Nobleman
- “On the Humanity of a Bat,” Paul Levitz
- “The Summer of the Bat,” Jeff Tucker
- “75 Years of the Batman Logo,” Todd Klein

**Week 7**

T 2/17                      READING: “A Theory of Resonance,” Wai Chi Dimock (available via Sakai)

VIEWING: Batmusic

- *Batman* (1966) theme: <http://youtu.be/1jgE-lrfZ3k>
- “The Origin of the Batusi”:  
<http://youtu.be/WFLzOpMBavY>
- “Batdance,” Prince: <http://youtu.be/dMdwDSz-oc?list=RDdMdwDSz-oc> (note that the official music video is not available on Youtube—this is the music video with another audio track)
- “Kiss from a Rose,” Seal:  
<http://youtu.be/fRzNTHvKnak>
- *Batman: The Animated Series* theme:  
<http://youtu.be/A71i0a5x-qA>
- *Batman: The Brave and the Bold* theme:  
<http://youtu.be/A71i0a5x-qA>

- *The Dark Knight Rises* (main theme), Hans Zimmer & James Newton Howard:  
<http://youtu.be/vLqKSv1F42A>

Th 2/19 MIDTERM DUE: PODCASTS (Batman in the 21<sup>st</sup> century)  
WORKSHOP: Adobe Creative Cloud (InDesign)

**Week 8**

T 2/24 PODCASTS (Batman in the 21<sup>st</sup> century) DISCUSSION  
NCComicon Marketing Assignment Overview

Th 2/26 NCComicon Marketing Assignment Workshop 1

**Week 9**

T 3/3 Finish: Dimock's "Theory of Resonance"  
NCComicon Marketing Assignment Overview

Th 3/5 NCComicon Marketing Workshop 1

3/6 - 3/15 **Spring Break**

**Week 10**

T 3/17 NCComicon Marketing Workshop 2

Th 3/19 NCComicon Marketing Presentations

**Week 11**

T 3/24 READING: *Save the Cat*, Blake Snyder (through the end of Chapter 5)  
WORKSHOP: The Logline

Th 3/26 READING: *Save the Cat*, Blake Snyder (complete the book)  
WORKSHOP: The Pitch

**Week 12**

T 3/31 Networking and Pitching Assignment

Th 4/2 Production Group Assignments  
WORKSHOP: Creating and Managing a Production Calendar

**Week 13**

T 4/7 Production Meeting #1: Speaking Graphically

Th 4/9                      WORKSHOP: Speaking Graphically

**Week 14**

T 4/14                      Production and Workshop: Speaking Graphically

Th 4/16                    FINAL PROJECTS DUE  
Presentation of Final Projects

**Week 15**

T 4/21                      Lecture: "On Serial Historiography"  
READING: *Joker: Live in Metropolis*  
*Batman: Endgame* (available via Sakai)

Th 4/23                    FINAL PORTFOLIOS DUE