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| <b>Veranstalter</b>          | <b>Prof. Dr. Astrid Böger</b>  |
| <b>Thema</b>                 | <b>The Contemporary American Graphic Novel</b><br>[AA-V4a/b, ENG-13, AA-M14, AA-M15, AA-W] |
| <b>Art der Veranstaltung</b> | <b>Seminar II</b>  |
| <b>Veranstaltungsnummer</b>  | <b>53-572</b>  |
| <b>Zeit</b>                  | <b>Di 16-18</b>  |
| <b>Raum</b>                  | <b>Phil 1219</b>   |
| <b>Beginn</b>                | <b>05.04.11</b>  |

### **Course Description:**

Ever since Art Spiegelman's publication of *Maus* (1972-1991), the world of comics has not been the same, not even in terms of terminology. Thus, the newly-introduced label 'graphic novel' aims to give a recognizable name to the current explosion of graphic narratives accompanied by an effective global marketing scheme targeting decidedly adult and highly literary audiences. In our course, we will first learn how to appreciate this creative new format by studying its formal composition and special capacities when it comes to telling stories in both visual and literary terms. We will do so by looking at a selection of quite recent work from *The Best American Comics 2010*, a publication which in itself testifies to the emergence of comics and graphic novels (not only) in the United States. Next, we will turn to two recent and particularly compelling graphic novels or, rather, memoirs, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2004) and Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (2006). Though both are autobiographies by women, their style and subject matter are markedly different. In brief, Satrapi focuses on her childhood experiences in Iran, where she felt torn between a liberal and outspoken home and a rather repressive public life. Having first appeared in France before it came out in the United States and became something of a global bestseller, *Persepolis* presents a form of transnational memory told from a young girl's perspective. Bechdel's *Fun Home*, on the other hand, is set in a quintessentially American environment and treats the repressed homosexuality of her father who could not express his true identity and paid dearly for it. Interestingly, the medium formerly known as comic book in both cases serves to face – and work through – traumas connecting the personal with the national, and in Satrapi's case even the transnational sphere. The overall aim of this course is to better understand the special capacity of the contemporary graphic novel in this regard, i.e. as a highly effective medium of creative memory formation.

### **Course Requirements:**

Regular attendance and participation as well as thorough preparation of visual and other materials are essential. In order to receive course credit, each student will be expected to give an in-class presentation and write a final term paper of 15 to 20 pp.

Important Note: While some additional materials will be made available via AGORA, all students will be required to buy Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (ISBN 978-0-099-52399-4) and Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* (ISBN 978-0-618-87171-1). Both texts have been ordered at Reuter & Klöckner.

For additional background reading, Paul Gravett's *Graphic Novels: Stories to Change your life* (2005) is recommended.

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| <b>Sprechstunde während der Vorlesungszeit</b>         | Di 13:30-14:30                             |
| <b>Sprechstunden während der vorlesungsfreien Zeit</b> | Genaue Termine werden noch bekannt gegeben |