

Veranstalter.....	Johannes C. P. Schmid
Thema.....	History and Mediality of the American Comic Book [AA-A3, ENG-7, ENG-7a, AA11, LAA10, LAA13, AA-W, AA-WB]
Art der Veranstaltung.....	Seminar II [auch als Seminar 1b für Studierende mit Zulassung vor WS 14/15]
Veranstaltungsnummer.....	53-560
Zeit.....	Di 12 – 14 Uhr
Raum.....	Phil 1263
Beginn.....	5. April 2016

### Course description:

In recent years comics and graphic novels have become an established art form and as such object of investigation among the disciplines of literary and media studies. Without dismissing the various European traditions it can nonetheless be stated that the American influence has vastly shaped the medium throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is not only true for the immensely popular superhero genre, but also for the rise of the graphic novel and various experimental forms in the later half of the century.

The aim of this seminar will first be to explore comics as a medium and learn how to analyze graphic narratives as *sequential art* that involves both language as well as images. In the first weeks of the course we will therefore familiarize ourselves with the necessary analytical tools and terminology for the study of comics. Afterwards, we will take a tour through various periods of comic book writing, starting with the first incarnations of *Batman* and *Superman* in 1930s. We will proceed to investigate the *Golden* and *Silver Age* of superhero comics and look at the general cultural and political climate they originated from. Then, we shall look at the inception of the graphic novel and *underground comix* in the *1970s* and *-80s*, including genre-defining works such as Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns*.

Finally, we shall look at formats like the *graphic memoir* and *comics journalism*, but also experimental takes on the format of the graphic novel.

Throughout the seminar we will try to read through roughly eighty years of comic history. The course will therefore be work-intensive and calls for a keen interest in graphic literature.

**Course Requirements:**

Regular attendance, active participation and a very short oral presentation (“Impulsreferat”) as well as the “adoption” of one theoretical text. Furthermore you will be required to write a term paper of approximately 15 pages. Most reading materials will be provided via Agora, however, you will be required to buy *The Dark Knight Returns* by Frank Miller (ISBN: 1563893428) as well as *The Fixer* by Joe Sacco (ISBN: 0224073826).

**Suggested Reading:**

Duncan, Randy, and Matthew J. Smith. *The Power of Comics: History, Form and Culture*. New York and London: Continuum, 2009.

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: William Morrow, 1994.

Office hours weekly	By appointment
Office hours during semester break	By appointment