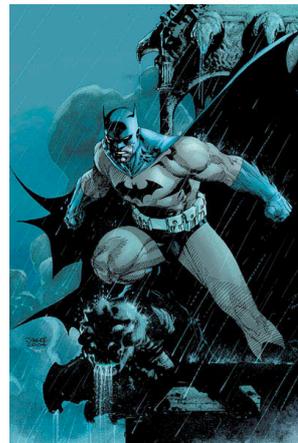
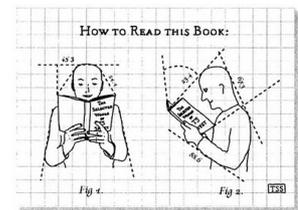
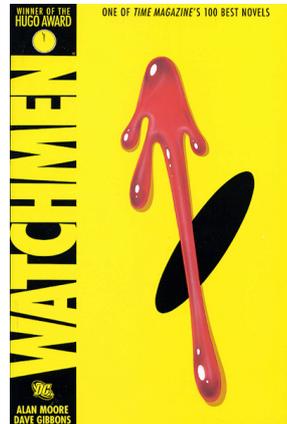
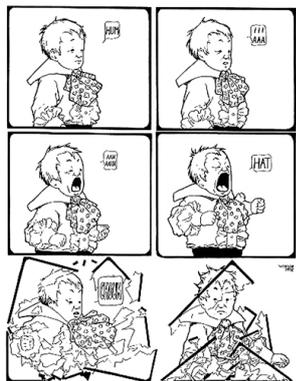
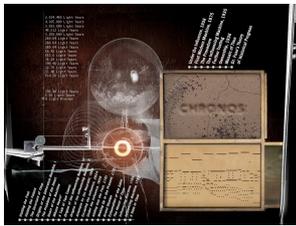


CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE - DK1416

Elective course, fall 2012
 Blekinge Institute of Technology
 Teacher: Maria Engberg (meg@bth.se)



OBJECTIVES & CONTENT

The course explores contemporary literature in various forms: in print, artists' books, graphic novels, digital literature etc. Digital culture is altering our understanding of writing, story-telling and reading. The literary works that the course focuses on provide new perspectives on these more general issues of reading and writing literature in an age of digital media. The course concentrates on the reading and experience of different forms of literary writing across media forms. In addition, we investigate theories about multimodality and narrative from historical and contemporary perspectives. The literature we study is mostly from the 1980s onward, with particular focus on 21st century literary innovative works.

During the course the students will study a range of literary texts whose common aesthetic component is multimodality. This can mean interactivity, word-and-image constellations, or the inclusion of sound or video. The focus is to study what is called the pictorial turn in literature. Based in theories about multimodality, graphic novels and digital literature we address issues such as: what is multimodal storytelling? How does digital technology change literary writing theoretically and in practice? How can we think about ways of

learning from literature to create other multimodal documents in order to effectively communicate, persuade or affect readers?

The course includes students' own creative work as well as literary and visual criticism and analysis.

AIMS & LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of the course the student will be able to:

- 😊 Identify and discuss theories about multimodality
- 😊 Demonstrate analytic skills in word-and-image relationships in printed and digital works.
- 😊 Present knowledge in literary and multimodal analysis.
- 😊 Show awareness of new digital genres and forms of publication
- 😊 Show ability to relate literary analysis to a general audience through their own writing.

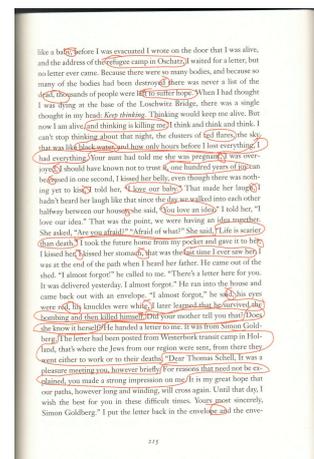
EXAMINATION

Examination will include your own creative work, writing as well as analysis.

- Presentation, 2 credits
- Written examination, 8 credits (divided into several assignments)

READINGS & MATERIAL

- 😊 Barry, Lynda. *What It Is*. Drawn & Quarterly, 2008.
- 😊 Foer, Jonathan Safran. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. Mariner Books, 2006 or movie tie-in edition 2011.
- 😊 Gardner, Jared. *Projections: Comics and the History of Twenty-First-Century Storytelling*. Stanford UP, 2012.
- 😊 McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. William Morrow, 1994.
- 😊 Mitchell, W.J.T. and Mark B.N. Hansen. *Critical Terms for Media Studies*. University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- 😊 Moore, Alan och Dave Gibbons. *Watchmen*. DC Comics. 1995 (any edition – complete series).
- 😊 Satrapi, Marjane. *The Complete Persepolis*. Pantheon, 2007.
- 😊 Talbot, Bryan. *Alice in Sunderland*. Jonathan Cape, 2007.
- 😊 Tomasula, Steve. *TOC: A New Media Novel*. 2009 (latest edition)



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- 😊 Van Leuwen, Theo and Gunther Kress. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. T & F Books, 2007. Second edition.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. WORDLESS STORY (2 credits)

Using photographs/images that you manipulate to comics-style drawings using image software (such as Photoshop filters), or by drawing yourself (in any medium or style that you prefer), create a story without words using the 9 panel format. Pick one of the these titles:

- 😊 The first day, first job
- 😊 The night I met you
- 😊 The dog and the cat
- 😊 New York, New York
- 😊 Why I hate/love Facebook

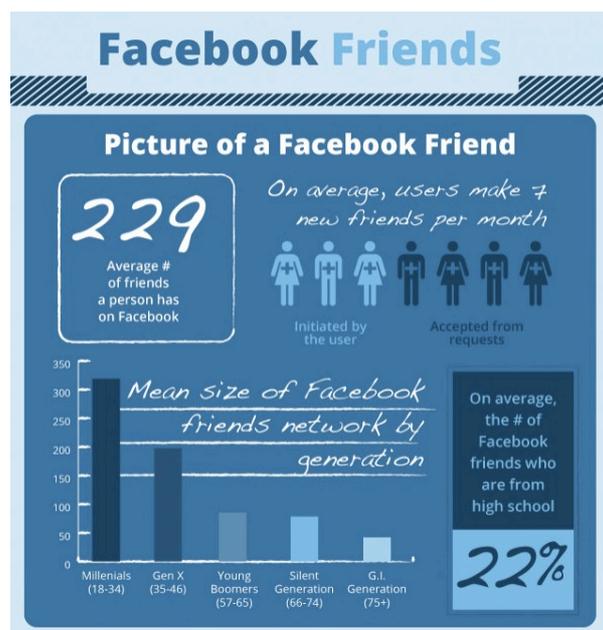
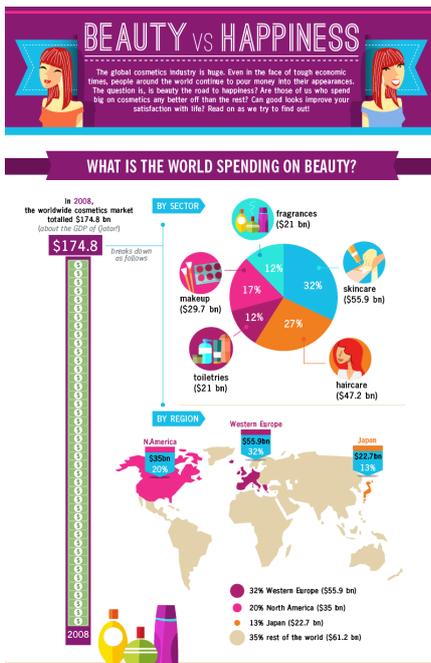
The constraints are intended to train you to get across the essence or point of a story (one that you make up) guided only by the title given and the images you choose to use. You can make your story funny, serious, ironic, sad... whatever your purpose it should be clear to the reader.

Upload it to It's Learning (further instructions in class).
Present your story in feedback sessions.

2. INFOGRAPHICS (2 credits)

Create an infographic regarding Internet use. Choose an interesting fact, statistics, or set of statistics regarding a digital media phenomenon, up to you.

Look at these for inspiration and information, more will be shown and discussed in class:
Visual.ly: <http://visual.ly>



Mashable: mashable.com /uses a lot of infographics from various sources/



3. But, seriously... (4 credits)

Write a 1500 word “defense of literature,” based in an understanding of how literature is developing, changing, and becoming something else, *materially* as well as *culturally* today.

Ours is a cultural moment characterized by a plenitude of creative and cultural practices, products, and media outlets. It is also a time of a (long time coming) dismantling of hierarchies. Literature has been an important part of national education in most countries during the last centuries, and it was understood to be one of the most important and culturally superior forms of creative practice. Today, literature has to compete with other kinds of storytelling (such as TV-series, movies etc). Literature, understood as printed on

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paper and bound as books must also compete with other material forms of literary or creative writing.

Your task is to write a glowing defense of a new literature. In addition to words, use images, layout, colors, whatever else you want in order to address the question at hand. “Where” and “how” is literature today? Is it graphic novels? Is it multimedia novels? Pop-culture novels that spawn transmedia phenomena (films, games, graphic novels etc.) such as *Twilight* or *Hunger Games*? Is it iPad/smart phone apps? Here you are invited to use other people’s writing that you find is relevant to the question, either from the course literature, or from other sources.

4. Oral presentation (2 credits)

You are responsible for presenting and leading the discussion on one section of the readings (the specific sections will be announced and divided during the introductory meeting). You can work alone or in groups/pairs.

Full instructions in class and on It’s Learning on what is expected of you in this role.