

Pre-College Comic Book Art Summer 2018

Instructor: Abraham Evensen Tena [REDACTED]

Meeting time: Mondays and Fridays from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Class Overview and Objectives

The main objective of this class is to learn the fundamental characteristics of the comic art form through experimentation and iteration. You will explore the unique elements that make comic and sequential art a powerful author/artists medium. Focusing on observation, drawing, composition, and design, you will craft stories that share your worldview. By making comics, you will strive to change your relationship to popular culture, from a passive consumer to an active producer. We will aim to think critically about the words and images we use to communicate our ideas, as well as discovering what motivates our creativity.

While comics depend on drawing and writing to create meaning, your main goal in this class is to develop as a storyteller. You will learn and practice foundational aspects of storytelling, such as theme, narrative and plot. Mixing observations of the world around you with imagination and fantasy, we will create stories that are not only entertaining but also insightful. You will search for the moral arguments that drive your creativity, and find the means to express those arguments to your reader.

Class Policies

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: If you are a student with a disability that may require accommodations to complete the requirements of this class, you are encouraged to discuss your learning needs with the instructor during the first week of the term. Once you submit an approval letter from the Office of Disability Support Services to the instructor, accommodations will be provided as needed.

[REDACTED]

ATTENDANCE: RISD attendance policy requires students to attend all classes regularly and punctually.

- Three (3) absences will result in dismissal from the program.
- Attendance is taken two (2) times per class - once at the beginning of class and again after the lunch break.
- Arrival after attendance is taken is considered one-half (1/2) of an absence and notated on your record.
- You must notify the instructor in advance of any Health Services appointments by showing the instructor the appointment confirmation from health services. Unless otherwise by Health Services, students are expected to return immediately to class after their appointment.

MISSED CLASSES + ASSIGNMENTS: All students are required to make up any missed class time and/or assignments. Please contact the instructor immediately after a missed attendance to discuss missed information and make-up work.

ABOUT LATE WORK: Because how you present yourself and your work in group critique is such an important part of your grade, handing in late assignments (and therefore not being able to participate fully) is unacceptable. Each assignment must be completed to a reasonable and logical degree by the due date or it will not be critiqued, and so your grade will suffer.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the copying of existing artwork, design, or written material or representing someone else's work as your own. Working from photographs is allowed and sometimes necessary for the production of illustrations and layouts, however an attempt should be made to adapt and alter the image so as not to merely duplicate someone else's artwork in another medium or form. Do not take the ideas someone else has worked hard to create or their composition, lighting, angle, technique, etc. If you are unsure of whether something is plagiarism, please check with

the instructor in advance. Failure to abide by this rule will result in failing the course and could result in expulsion from the program.

ARTISTIC CONTENT/STUDIO USE: RISD Pre-College students may not produce images of themselves, other students, or other live models (except for classroom models provided by RISD) in a state of full, partial, or suggestive nudity.

All photography studio/lab use must be supervised during classroom hours and a monitor must be present during non-classroom lab hours.

Students considering any sexually explicit, sexually oriented, or potentially controversial subject matter, or activities that may pose a threat to health, safety and well-being of the RISD community, must review the project with faculty prior to creating the work. Faculty and/or the Pre-College Coordinator will have final say as to the appropriateness of a project and if a student should proceed.

FINALS CRITIQUE WEEK POLICIES + PROCEDURES

Majors Exhibition:

All students are given the opportunity to exhibit one work from their major. Participating in the exhibition is a requirement in order to complete the program, so be sure you follow the directions to submit your work on time. Your instructor will select 1 artwork that represents your best work and the course objectives. The faculty selection is final and substitutions are not allowed. Projects included in the exhibition must be completed and presentation ready by drop-off time. Substituting artwork will result in the lowering of the student's grade and possible failure of the course.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION POLICY: Students who have successfully completed the class with a grade of B+ or better may request a letter of recommendation. All requests should be made in writing via email to [REDACTED] and must include the following:

Your Name
 Due Date
 Institution / Company Name
 Directions for Submittals (weblinks, hard copy on letterhead, etc.):
 Any other relevant information that we need to know.

Requests should be sent no later than **three** weeks prior to the due date. It is your responsibility to follow up with institutions and or companies to ensure all letters of recommendation have been received by them and are on time.

Class Structure

Every class will include a lecture about the day's topics. It is your responsibility to show up on time, ask questions, and participate in the discussion. You should also take notes on your sketchbook, and write down any questions you wish to ask later. Be prepared to enrich the class with your favorite examples and personal experiences.

Most classes will start with a group critique of your homework assignment. Please follow these guidelines when giving critique to a fellow storyteller:

1. All comments during critique must be *constructive, respectful, and to the point*. Avoid any derogatory or mean-spirited remarks, unnecessary references to other works or artists, and personal comments that go beyond the scope of the assignment.
2. Do your best to go beyond comments such as “I like this character” or “I love this line-work.” Instead, focus on *why* those elements move you as a reader, and *how* those elements support the overall goals of the piece.
3. Ask questions and *establish a conversation* whenever possible. It is perfectly acceptable to ask the artist how they accomplished a technical or conceptual aspect of their work. After multiple critique sessions, it will become apparent that we all have different strengths and weaknesses.

Please follow these guidelines when receiving critique from a fellow storyteller or the instructor:

1. Pay attention to the *specifics*: what could you change? What should be explored further? What should you *carry over* to the next assignment? Have your sketchbook at hand and *write down* your takeaways.
2. *Ask questions* if the feedback is unclear, or you wish to know more about the subject at hand. What you learn during critique is *your responsibility*. We are here as your person focus group during critique!
3. Do not take feedback as *personal*. Remember that your work is not you, and that even the most talented storyteller has something to learn. If a particular comment feels unfair or misguided, you can politely express your concerns and request clarification.

As discussed above, it is required that you present at least one of your assignments for the Final Major’s Exhibition. Most homework assignments will give you specific landmarks to hit, but since each comic is different, the instructor may give you particular tasks each week. It is your responsibility to make sure that you meet one-on-one with the instructor if you have questions, keep the communication constant and open, and request help as needed. Be an advocate for your own learning!

Prerequisites

There are no specific classes you need to take previous to Pre-College Comic Book Art, but there are competencies that will make it much easier for you to succeed in it. General familiarity with comics will make the class more productive, although there is no preference for a specific genre, style or country of origin. It is important, however, that you are open-minded and seek to appreciate not only your favorites, but also material unfamiliar to you.

Drawing is very important to this class. Regardless of your skill level or aesthetic interest, a good amount of observational drawing is expected. You will have daily drawing challenges, as well as sketching and design tasks to complete. The instructor will demonstrate various drawing techniques that apply to a wide range of styles. Be open minded about drawing conclusions. It should be your goal to explore new ways of making art, rather than simply creating more of what you already know how to do.

For the purposes of this class, writing describes both the physical activity of writing down words, and the art of creating stories. There will be exercises in which you must letter/write comics by hand, and others where you will want to use a computer. In the same vein, some of the stories you’ll work with could follow genre conventions (sci-fi, fantasy) or be tied to the observable world. While imagination is strongly encouraged, strive for authenticity and insight. One question alone will help steer your writing and drawing into insight: “*Is what I am creating the result of personal observations, or am I simply repeating what other people have said?*”

Materials

This is the list of materials you will need for this class:

Sketchbook:

White or light-toned paper, of 60lb or better quality
 Minimum size of 8.5" by 11"
 Spiral bound and/or Micro-perforated for easy tear
 50 pages minimum

Tracing Paper:

Tracing paper drawing pad of Minimum size of 11" by 17" (tabloid,) and or
 Tracing paper roll (12" wide)

Note: Buy the economy or student quality type only (25lb)

Drawing Paper:

Bristol or similar quality drawing paper (100 lb minimum)
 Minimum size 11" x 17" (Tabloid)
 20 pages minimum

Note: if you buy comic-book specific bristol boards, please avoid ready-made layouts (no grids or vignettes.) Pre-ruled papers are ok.

Illustration Board:

Minimum size of 20" by 30"

Rulers and other utensils:

Plastic/metal ruler (18" recommended)
 Clear plastic triangle ruler (10" recommended)
 Magic Tape
 Scissors
 Kneaded and white eraser
 Pencil sharpener

Pencils:

4H, HB and 2B pencils, and/or mechanical pencil with same weight leads
 Blue and Red erasable color pencils, and/or mechanical pencil with same color leads
 Set of traditional color pencils (set of 12 minimum)

Inking:

Micron Pens (fine, medium and thick widths, such as 01, 05, and 08,)
 White gouache paint and 00 watercolor brush, for corrections.

Note: during class, the instructor will demonstrate and encourage the exploration of at least one of these techniques:

Dip pen (holder and standard drawing nib) and/or
 Sable brushes (fine, medium and thick sizes, such as 00, 2, and 4)
 India Ink (Black and other colors, for pen or sable brushes)

Clay Sculpture (no needed the first day):

1lb of Polymer Clay or Plastilina (medium hardness)
 Armature Wire (Between the size of 9 and 12)
 Aluminium Foil
 Masking Tape
 Tailor's measuring tape
 Modeling tools (wire loop tool, sculpting, cutting and trimming)

Course Requirements and Grading

There are seven components to your final grade:

Sketchbook exercises	10%
Participation & Attendance	10%
One Panel/Panorama comic	10%

Tryptic comic	10%
4 and 6 Panel journal comics	10%
The Accordion Book of NO	15%
4+ Final Comic	35%
Total	100%

For every assignment you will receive a One-Page Brief with rules, constrains, and specifications. Make sure to get a copy, and to ask any questions you may have about your homework. For the purpose of this class, assignments are graded in the following categories:

1. **Drawing:** are your drawings clear, communicative, and with enough visual interest? Are you drawings informed by reference, observation and/or stylistic discovery? Are your drawings ambitious, and challenge your comfort zone?
2. **Writing:** are your stories personal and insightful? Do they have some sort of arc or progression? Do they spring for personal experiences, preoccupation and aspirations?
3. **Comic:** are your comics taking advantage of the medium? How is your comic doing something that animation, film, illustration or other mediums cannot?
4. **Presentation:** are your assignments neatly presented? Are the inks, colors, letters, panels, bubbles and frames drawn with care? Is your comic free of unintentional smudges, stains, tears, etc? Is your name and the date of production clearly written somewhere in the piece?

And finally, this is an explanation on the meaning of each grade:

- A** Outstanding development, comprehension and quality
- A -** Almost outstanding development, comprehension and quality
- B +** Very good development, comprehension and quality
- B** Good development, comprehension and quality
- B -** Average development, comprehension and quality
- C +** Marginal development, comprehension and quality
- C** Unclear development, comprehension and quality
- C -** Lacking any development, comprehension and quality
- D** Not acceptable/did not follow direction
- F** Not attempted and/or Missed Project/Critique

Tips and Tricks: how to succeed in this class?

Here is some general advice for this and all college level classes. Follow them and you will have a great time, and learn at the same time:

- Chase after your instructors, because they won't chase after you.
- Instructors and colleagues are here to help, but all learning here is your responsibility.
- If you feel like you are not getting something out of a lecture, activity or assignment, speak up!
- Use every resource available, from the facilities to the instructor's time.
- Get used to asking for help, and be ready to say "I don't know. Could you explain it to me?"
- Compare notes and be generous with your classmates. We are all in this together!
- Do not pull all-nighters: eat, sleep, relax, and keep on working.
- If you feel sad, frustrated or angry, make art about sadness, frustration or anger.
- It's better to make mistakes and learn how to fix them, than never to take risks.

Calendar

Date	Topic	Assignment
6/25	Intro. Comics. Word and Image	One Panel Story
6/29	Drawing for Comics. Character and anatomy	Triptic
7/2	Time in Comics. Iconic Language	4 Panel Journals
7/6	Perspective and staging.	6 Panel with panel size
7/9	Pacing and motion. Accordion demo	Accordion Book of "NO"
7/13	Theme and Storytelling	Pitch and Concept Art
7/16	Character Design. Figure Session 2	Character Sheet
7/20	Character Sculpture. Using Reference	4+ Final Comic
7/23	Layout Design. Color and Composition	4+ Final Comic
7/27	Production and Critique	4+ Final Comic
7/30	Distribution and Publishing	Comics we Need
8/3	Critique. Character Wars.	

Notes:

1. The instructor reserves the right to modify, remove or add topics and assignments, based on the group's progress. The instructor will make sure to update and deliver a revised calendar if that is the case.
2. All assignments are due next class. Check each assignment's **One-Page Brief** for details.
3. You can send work in progress by email for feedback, but all assignments must be presented in physical form at the beginning of class.

