

# Undergraduate English Course Description Packet

## August Intersession 2015

Revised 03-06-2015

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### **ENGL 3863/4573: Literature and Culture of the American South: The Pop South**

**Teacher: L. Hinrichsen**

#### **Textbooks Required:**

No books required. Films and television shows will be screened in class and required readings will be provided on Blackboard.

#### **Description:**

In this course we will survey how the U.S. South has been imagined and invented through popular culture. Through examining films, television, magazines, graphic novels, music, and other cultural artifacts from the early twentieth century to more recent postmodern examples—including advertisements, digital texts, architecture, products and industries, action figures, tours and re-enactments, monuments and memorials, and foodways—we will trace how popular representations of “the South” attest to the ways in which the region is an inherently complicated space. As we discuss the relationship between the U.S. South, visual culture, and print media, we will trace how popular culture speaks to national and transnational transformations, including changing modes of conceptualizing race, class, gender, and regional identity.

Rather than view popular culture as a “bad object” of analysis associated with commercialism, consumerism, and a lack of authenticity, or as representative of “low” culture unworthy of scholarly attention, we will take it (mostly) seriously. In seeing popular culture as connected to intimacy and domesticity, individual and collective identity, memory, and the everyday, we will investigate how and why it traffics in fantasies about gender, sex, race, class, and region, and we will interrogate the way that pop representation defines, enacts, and sometimes resists disciplinary rubrics of sexual, racial, class, and gender norms that fundamentally shape everyday life.

Expect a mix of cutting-edge theory combined with inventive, diverse primary “texts” as we interrogate the meaning and significance of pop culture as it pertains to the U.S. South.

**Requirements:** Daily quizzes, writing portfolio, enthusiastic participation, presentation and discussion facilitation, cumulative final exam.

**ENGL 3903, Special Topics: The Graphic Novel****Teacher: S. Teuton****Textbooks Required:***Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, by Scott McCloud*Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, by Frank Miller*Maus I and II*, by Art Spiegelman*Safe Area Gorazde: The War in Eastern Bosnia 1992-1995*, by Joe Sacco*American Splendor*, by Harvey Pekar*Fun Home*, by Alison Bechdel**Description:**

Since Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* won the Pulitzer Prize Special Award in 1992, novels presented in the medium of comics, otherwise known as "graphic novels," have grown both in popularity and respect within the fields of literature, history, and popular cultural studies. This course traces the history of the medium of comics; the history of the graphic novel; and the use of comics as a means of social commentary. Particular attention will be paid to the relationship between visual and textual representation, and the ways this coupling in the graphic novel carries ideas about ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality. Students will read many of the best contemporary graphic novels from the 1980s to the present and leave the course with a strong understanding of the form and function of comics as a contemporary art form.

**Other Requirements:** One examination and one essay