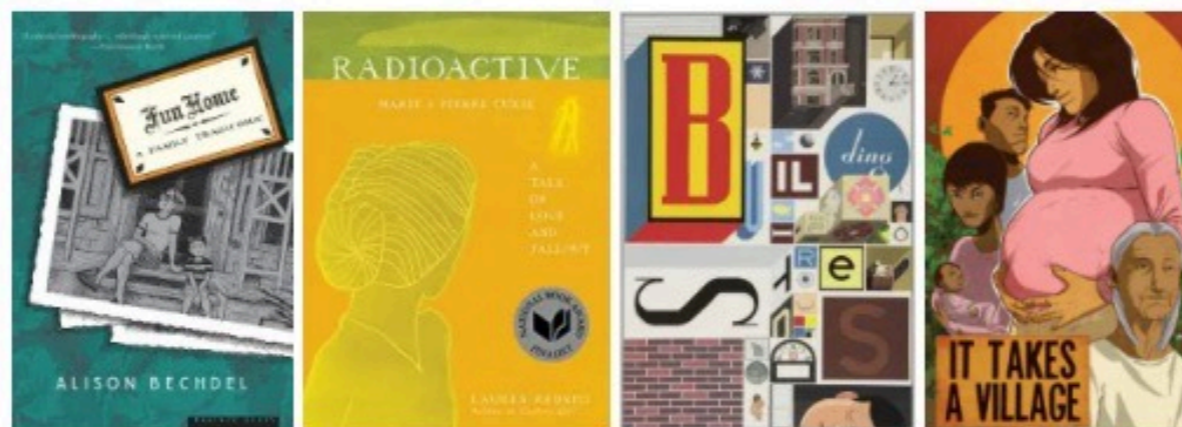




Writing Seminar



GRAPHIC NOVELS! INFO COMICS! TRANSMEDIA KNOWLEDGE!

ENGL 1168-106 • TuTh 1:25-2:40 • Rockefeller 102 Prof. Jon McKenzie • jvm62@cornell.edu • Office: Tues 3:00-4:00 • TBD

[Google folder link](#) [Cornell Library Catalogue](#) [OWL MLA citation guide](#) [Zoom link](#)

Graphic novels and comics have long mixed research and storytelling. From *Maus* to *Logicomix* to *Fun Home*, graphic novelists often tackle complex historical, scientific, and literary issues. The *For Beginners* and

Project 4: Research Proposal with Annotated Bibliography

Write a **1500-1750 word research proposal** with preliminary abstract, book/topic summary, and annotated bibliography of at least 15 sources for Project 5/6.

We will continue using scaffolding of notes, outlines, sparklines, etc: research proposals are another scaffold.

Research proposals promise to think beyond what you know and perhaps also to do the impossible. THINK BIG, REACH WIDE, AND GO DEEP. You are NOT doing a book report here but using your graphic novel to *think the unthinkable* at three scales: personal, field, and world. The world is on fire and you're studying comics: why? What is the lesson of *It Takes a Village*? How will you write this paper?

In the next two weeks, you'll need to read your info comic/graphic novel AND use databases to begin researching its central issue, formal genre (eg, graphic memoir, graphic medicine), historical significance (eg. MAUS controversies), etc. to generate PRELIMINARY ideas and research materials.

Your paper has three parts: abstract, summary, bibliography. The abstract sets forth the *Why* or purpose of your research; the summary outlines the *What* or terrain of your book/topic; and the bibliography shows your *How* or methods/materials you'll use to approach it.

1. Proposal Abstract: 75 words: use the WHY WHAT HOW structure, with primary focus on WHY the book/topic is important to you, your field, and the world. This outlines your research quest/question.
2. Book/topic summary: 250 words: summarize the book itself: its general "mission," overall organization (narrative, argumentative, experimental), and main formal devices (use of image/word, transitions, repetition, etc.). Your research will cut a path through this larger terrain.
3. Annotated Bibliography of 15 external sources: approx 75 words each (total approx 1125). Combine database and Internet research to generate preliminary bibliography on book/topic. Here use WHAT, WHY, HOW: what the article says, why that's important to you, how you might draw on specific tools/concepts/perspectives.

Eg: It Takes a Village

ITAV uses graphic narrative to situate culturally competent care in the lifeworld of pregnant Indigenous teenagers in Canada. A series of narrative scenes and dramatic encounters, mixed with Magical Realist moments and identification with the main character, reveals to readers that traditional Indigenous approaches to pregnancy combined with Western prenatal medical care can significantly improve the lives of Indigenous mothers and infants. ITAV demonstrates how logos and mythos can produce new ethos.

Use this project to grapple with something important to you (though you may not yet fully understand why), that addresses a question or issue important to others (though they may not even realize it), and/or that explores the world from different perspectives or worlds (that may not do so often or at all). If you "can't find anything" researching your novel/issue, then either dig deeper, zoom out, and/or choose another book/topic.

Draft: Thurs, 10/26 Final: Tues, 10/31

Abstract Proposal

- **A statement of the problem and objectives**
- **A statement of the significance of the work**
- **A summary of employed methods or your research approach**

"The Best We Could Do" by Thi Bui is a graphic memoir that traces the author's family's journey from war-torn Vietnam to the challenges of building a new life in America. Through evocative illustrations and heartfelt storytelling, Bui explores themes of identity, parenthood, and the enduring impact of displacement. The narrative weaves between generations, offering a deeply personal reflection on the universal quest for belonging and understanding in the face of historical upheaval.

Abstract Workshop

- **What & Why:** Choosing and describing book: import of YOUR research, NOT book: use book to THINK BIG
- To cover your bases: choose one online project, one physical book/pdf
- Summarize it to get “book report” out of your system. Use book to think X.
- **How:** Describing your approach to book/topic
 - Concepts from course readings
 - Concepts from external research

Homework

- **Select and summarize books**
- **Gather articles and perspectives**
- **Strengthen your abstracts**
 - Concepts from course readings
 - Concepts from external research

Conceptual Matrix

	NAS	Cornell	Salon	...	YOU
Key concepts					
Key metaphors					
Key images					
Key citations					
Mix of ethos/ pathos/logos					
Other significant traits/patterns/ differences					

Conceptual Matrix

	Life on Earth is an individual, Margarida Hermida	The Character of Physical Law, R Feynman	Mineral–organic interfacial processes: Potential roles in the origins of life, Cleaves II et al.,	A third transition in science? Kauffman and Roli	YOU
Key concepts					
Key metaphors					
Key images					
Key citations					
Mix of ethos/ pathos/logos					
Other significant traits/patterns/ differences					
Annotation summary					

Conceptual Matrix

	Source 1	Source 2	Source 3	... Source 15	YOU
Key concepts					
Key evidence					
Key metaphors					
Key images					
Key citations					
Mix of ethos/ pathos/logos					
Other significant traits/patterns/ differences					
Annotation summary					

Bibliographic Workshop

- **Research and collect sources (MESS):**
 - Use databases and internet to **find and collect research and information**
 - **Look for different perspectives BETWEEN and WITHIN** different fields
 - Use abstracts and key concepts to **refine your interest, abstract AND SEARCH PROMPT**
- **Group research in clusters and generate conceptual spreadsheet (MYSTERY):**
 - Stack items in columns
 - Use columns as comparative categories
 - **Write 2-3 sentence summary** at bottom, also noting relevance to project
- **Use matrix to make Proj 5/6 sparkline (MESSAGE)**

Homework

- **Select and summarize books**
- **Gather articles and perspectives**
- **Strengthen your abstracts**
 - Concepts from course readings
 - Concepts from external research
- **Draft your essay for peer editing**