

ANTH 205 Justice and Media
Professor Amrita Ibrahim
Summer 2020 (May 18th – June 12th)
Mon-Fri 1-3 pm
Car Barn 172

Course Outline and Goals

The graphic medium is new to anthropology, even though techniques of drawing and visual recording have a long association with the discipline and in science more generally. Increasingly, a number of anthropologists are turning to drawing and the graphic form to tell important social stories and to express complex ideas of justice, solidarity, collaboration, and engaged activism. In this course, we will explore the role of drawing as a form of anthropological vision, learning to see through drawing and sketching, and understanding how justice reveals itself to us differently when apprehended through the drawn medium rather than the written medium. What are the affordances of the drawn and the visual over written forms of ethnography? How do images speak to us differently from words? Is it possible to be critical and reflexive about power, violence, and injustice through a comic book? Can ethnography and comic books be put together to achieve the necessary and urgent work of drawing attention to issues of social justice? We will not be reading a majority of ethnographies in graphic form; in fact, most of the books are not anthropology. Each of them do, however, embody a quality that is ethnographic, in that they seek to capture everyday forms of life in their complexity. We will read two graphic childhood memoirs, two forms of graphic journalism, and one ethnography in graphic form. We will use these and other readings to learn how to use sequential art, or the comic form, to tell our own stories and to explore how justice can be explored through these tellings.

Assignments and Expectations

This is a reading heavy course but a majority of the books you will be reading are graphic novels or methodological texts on drawing, seeing, and making a graphic novel. You will have one main assignment throughout the summer pre-session – to make a graphic novel of your own, drawing from your own life and experience. Each of the assignments during the four weeks of this summer course are oriented to this final project.

You will need:

1. Unlined paper or notebook – for drawing
2. Pencils – for drawing
3. Notebook and pen for note taking in class

I ask that you put away your laptops while you are in this class and use it only for the research you need to do to tell your stories for this class. Part of the effectiveness of drawing as a medium both for a reader as well as the maker is that it involves the body and all its senses in learning, understanding, and experiencing what a graphic narrative is trying to tell you. You will not be able to do this class if you are not willing to close that screen and pick up a piece of paper instead. You might be able to draw on a digital screen with a digital pen, but I prefer that you use

the old fashioned variety that leaves more visible physical traces of the learning process on the paper you're working on.

Books we will be reading:

1. *Understanding Comics* – Scott McCloud
2. *Unflattening* – Nick Sousanis
3. *Drawn to See* – Andrew Causey
4. *Lissa* – Sherine Hamdy and Coleman Nye
5. *Fun House* – Alison Bechdel
6. *Persepolis* – Marjane Satrapi
7. *Palestine* – Joe Sacco
8. *Rolling Blackouts* – Sarah Glidden

Books will be available in the bookstore, the library, and are also available for loan through the professor if you are unable to get your own copy for any reason. You may also buy or rent them from any online retailer if you find cheaper copies there. The occasional article will be scanned and made available on Canvas.

Course Schedule

Course material is being finalized, this is a draft syllabus. You will received the final syllabus in class at the first meeting

Week 1

How to produce knowledge through drawing

May 18th

May 19th

Unflattening the World: Nick Sousanis, *Unflattening*

May 20th

May 21st

May 22nd

Week 2

Sequential Art: What Comics Teach Us: Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics*

May 25th

May 26th

May 27th

Life Stories, Hidden Lives

May 28th Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*

May 29th

Week 3

Life Stories, Hidden Lives

June 1st Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*

June 2nd

Graphic Journalism, Minor Storylines

June 3rd Joe Sacco, *Palestine*

June 4th

June 5th Sarah Gliddens, *Rolling Blackouts*

Week 4

Ethnographic Storytelling

June 8th Sherine Hamdy, Coleman Nye, *Lissa*

June 9th

Student Presentations of Final Projects

June 10th

June 11th

June 12th

All final projects are due in my inbox/Canvas by the end of the day on Saturday June 13th.
Grades will be posted by June 15th.