



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of English
ENGL 108A
The Superhero
Spring 2022

Instructor Information

Instructor: J. Andrew Deman
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Office Hours: W 5:30-6:20 or by appointment/TEAMS
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Course Description

An examination of hero figures, ranging broadly from ancient characters such as Gilgamesh to the modern comic book superhero. Literary as well as nonliterary materials (e.g., film, comics, games) will be considered. The objective of this course is to track our cultural fascination with superheroes throughout the past century and place it within a broader literary context of the hero figure in general. Why are we drawn to the superhero? What cultural values are reflected through the superhero? What does the superhero say about us and our society in contrast to earlier societies? How does the superhero compare to older mythologies?

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Situate the figure of the superhero within a broader literary culture.
- B. Understand the superhero as a product of specific cultural and historical forces.
- C. Produce critical analysis on the subject of the superhero.
- D. Understand and appreciate multimodal storytelling

Required Texts

Please see the "course readings" list on LEARN.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
Reading Quizzes	Varied	20%
Discussion Forums	Varied	5%
Issue Summary	Week 6	15%
Content Test	Week 12	30%
Final Essay	Week 13	30%
Total		100%

Reading Quizzes

A series of straightforward reading quizzes designed to test your ability to keep up with our reading schedule and your retention of pivotal information from the texts. These will be conducted online throughout the term.

Discussion Forums

Each lecture will end with a discussion question or questions and a corresponding discussion forum will then be posted on LEARN. **FIVE** times throughout the term (you choose which ones you like), you will post a 100 word analytical response to one of the forums. Your response must be posted within 2 weeks of that forum's opening or it will not count toward your grade on this assignment. As long as your response is on-point, intelligent, and articulate, you will receive full marks for each post.

Issue Summary

This assignment will require students to compose an issue summary sheet that presents a critical and historical reading of a single-issue comic featuring a particular superhero.

Content Test

Straightforward questions that will address your understanding of both the readings, and of various concepts and perspectives discussed in lecture.

Final Essay

This paper will be the culmination of the student's work in the course. It will be a comparison of two or more classroom texts with regard to an issue of relevance to in-class discussions. All topics must be approved by me prior to writing. Students will receive a detailed description of this assignment along with pre-approved essay topics well in advance of the due date. Essay length will be 1500-2000 words.

Course Outline / Class Schedule

WEEK	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
1	Introduction	
1	The Superhero in Western Culture	
2	Gilgamesh	
2	Gilgamesh II	Quiz #1
3	Establishing an Archetype	
3	Pathos of the Superman	
4	Gendered Divides	Quiz #2
4	Mutanimity	
5	Assassination & Redemption	
5	Queer Superheroes	Quiz #3
6	Superheroes Deconstructed	Issue Summary
6	Superheroes Deconstructed II	
7	Superheroes Deconstructed III	Quiz #4
7	The Antihero	
8	Psychology and the Superhero	
8	Manga Foils	
9	Essay-Writing Workshop	
9	Comics Binaries	

10	Comics Binaries Part II	
10	Toxic Relationships	Quiz #5
11	Superhero Cinema	
11	Transmediation	
12	Transmediation II	
12	Content Test	Content Test
13	Final Essay	Final Essay

Late Work

All work submitted late will be subject to a penalty of 10% off per day.

Important Information

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Petitions and Grievances](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Appeals](#).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.