

Literature Review

Comics and Social Justice

Prepared by Luke Heine, SDSU History Major / Weber Honors College

“Queer Girlhoods in Contemporary Comics: Disrupting Normative Notions.”

- Author(s): Mel Gibson
- Full Citation: Gibson, Mel. “Queer Girlhoods in Contemporary Comics: Disrupting Normative Notions.” *Girlhood Studies* 13, no. 1 (March 2022): 1-13.
- Abstract: In this article, I look at how comics aimed at young readers can serve to disrupt normative notions, gendered binaries, and fixed designations through featuring, or focusing on, queer girlhoods. In doing so I consider two contemporary series, Ms. Marvel and Lumberjanes. I contextualize these titles against aspects of the publishing of comics, before analyzing some of the narratives and characters in the texts in relation to queer girlhoods. I conclude that the comics offer different approaches and, therefore, differentiated reading experiences for the young readers who engage with them, but that they also form part of a wider grouping of titles that offer diverse images of young people embracing affiliations going beyond family and nation. (author)
- Keywords: gender, girlhood, norms, representation, identity

Comic Book Crime: Truth, Justice, and the American Way.

- Author(s): Nickie D. Phillips, Staci Strobl
- Full Citation: Phillips, Nickie D., and Staci Strobl. *Comic Book Crime: Truth, Justice, and the American Way*. New York: New York University Press, 2013.
- Abstract:
- Key Points:
 - Comics readers engage thoughtfully with the artists’ narratives as critique on current trends in crime and punishment.
 - Emphasizes superheroes as vigilantes and fan discussion of those superheroes’ behavior.
- Keywords: violence, crime, punishment, vigilante

Super Black: American Pop Culture and Black Superheroes.

- Author(s): Adilifu Nama
- Full Citation: Nama, Adilifu. *Super Black: American Pop Culture and Black Superheroes*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011.
- Abstract: Winner, American Book Award, Before Columbus Foundation, 2012 Super Black places the appearance of black superheroes alongside broad and sweeping cultural trends in American politics and pop culture, which reveals how black superheroes are not disposable pop products, but rather a fascinating racial phenomenon through which futuristic expressions and fantastic visions of black racial identity and symbolic political meaning are presented. Adilifu Nama sees the value--and finds new avenues for exploring racial identity--in black superheroes who are often dismissed as sidekicks, imitators of established white heroes, or are accused of having no role outside of blaxploitation film contexts. Nama examines seminal black comic book superheroes such as Black Panther, Black Lightning, Storm, Luke Cage, Blade, the Falcon, Nubia, and others, some of whom also appear on the small and large screens, as well as how the

imaginary black superhero has come to life in the image of President Barack Obama. *Super Black* explores how black superheroes are a powerful source of racial meaning, narrative, and imagination in American society that express a myriad of racial assumptions, political perspectives, and fantastic (re)imaginings of black identity. The book also demonstrates how these figures overtly represent or implicitly signify social discourse and accepted wisdom concerning notions of racial reciprocity, equality, forgiveness, and ultimately, racial justice. (publisher)

- Keywords: race, representation, identity

“When Draupadi says #MeToo: Indian Comics Reimagining Gender Justice.”

- Author(s): Sharmila Lodhia
- Full Citation: Lodhia, Sharmila. “When Draupadi says #MeToo: Indian Comics Reimagining Gender Justice.” *Feminist Media Studies* 21, no. 5 (2021): 791-806.
- Abstract: Comics are a familiar and widespread form of popular culture within India and throughout the diaspora. They offer a unique format for the examination of new landscapes of gender relations and can broaden, albeit in an exploratory way, the boundaries and expressions of power and agency. Visual storytelling, through a set of graphic texts, presents a particularly evocative context for gender critique of sexual violence and for analyzing terrains of social inequality and injustice, especially when read with an eye toward the contemporary backdrop of the #MeToo movement. In this article, I analyze three distinct but interconnected Indian comics/graphic novels which endeavor to retell sections of the Mahabharat, an Indian epic involving a pivotal female character named Draupadi, whose unique life and trauma have served as creative muse for literature, theater, art and media. The contemporary resonance of these women-centered retellings, and the subject matter they explore highlight precise forms of gendered violence, the social construction of gender, and gendered manifestations of rage. They demand closer engagement with the visual texts themselves and the cultural milieu that shapes the politics of their production and reception. (author)
- Keywords: trauma, women, power, India, activism

"Graphic Novels Are Real Books": Comparing Graphic Novels to Traditional Text Novels

- Author(s): Poushali Bhadury
- Full Citation: Bhadury, Poushali. " "There Is No Such Thing as a Straight Woman": Queer Female Representations in South Asian Graphic Narratives." *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 22, no. 4 (2018): 424-434.
- Abstract: This essay provides a brief overview of some recent Indian and Bangladeshi comics and graphic novels, whether print-based or online, which feature queer female characters. The essay contextualizes these texts with respect to the anti-LGBTQ+ legal climate in South Asian countries, but also places them within a larger trajectory of literary representations of queer (female) love in the Indian subcontinent. The texts under examination range from print graphic novels and indie comics anthologies in India to comic strips brought out by queer activists working for LGBTQ+ education and advocacy in Bangladesh. Taken together, they offer diverse portrayals of female-centric love and desire that challenge hetero-patriarchal representations of desi women. (author)
- Keywords: LGBTQ+, women, India, Bangladesh, activism

“Introduction: The Social Justice Work of German Comics and Graphic Literature”

- Author(s): Elizabeth Nijdam
- Full Citation: Nijdam, Elizabeth. “Introduction: The Social Justice Work of German Comics and Graphic Literature.” *Seminar : a journal of Germanic studies* (Toronto) 56, no. 3 (2020): 191–211.
- Abstract (from conclusion): ...it has become clear that the comics form is being integrated into university curricula and academic scholarship because of the unique type of social justice work of which it is capable. With the medium’s historical predilection for problematic representations of BIPOC, women, and the LGBTQ community, the contemporary move to engage in social justice discourse through the comics form makes these interventions all the more profound. This special issue on German-language comics and graphic literature and social justice seeks to situate the developments occurring specifically in German-speaking Europe in the context of larger movements in transnational comics, taking into account the specific kinds of social justice work important in German studies and connecting them to the wider history of social justice themes in mainstream, underground, alternative, and Indigenous comics.
- Keywords: German comics, education

Superhero Culture Wars : Politics, Marketing, and Social Justice in Marvel Comics

- Author(s): Monica Flegel and Judith Leggatt
- Full Citation: Flegel, Monica, and Judith Leggatt. *Superhero Culture Wars : Politics, Marketing, and Social Justice in Marvel Comics / Monica Flegel and Judith Leggatt*. London, UK ;: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021.
- Abstract: The reactionary Comicsgate campaign against alleged "forced" diversity in superhero comics revealed the extent to which comics have become a key battleground in America's Culture Wars. In the first in-depth scholarly study of Marvel Comics' most recent engagement with progressive politics, *Superhero Culture Wars* explores how the drive towards greater diversity among its characters and creators has interacted with the company's commercial marketing and its traditional fan base. Along the way the book covers such topics as: Major characters such as Miles Morales's Spider-man, Kamala Khan's Ms. Marvel, Jane Foster's Thor, Sam Wilson's Captain America and the Secret Empire series' turncoat Captain America; Creators such as G. Willow Wilson, Jason Aaron, Nick Spencer and Michael Bendis; Marketing, the Marvel Universe, and online fan culture *Superhero Culture Wars* demonstrates how the marketing of Marvel comics as politically progressive has both indelibly shaped its in-world universe and characters, and led to conflicts between its corporate interests, its creators, and its audience.
- Keywords: Comicsgate, culture wars, Marvel comics, diversity

EC Comics : Race, Shock, and Social Protest

- Author(s): Qiana Whitted
- Full Citation: Whitted, Qiana J. *EC Comics : Race, Shock, and Social Protest / Qiana Whitted*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2019.
- Abstract:
- Entertaining Comics Group (EC Comics) is perhaps best-known today for lurid horror comics like *Tales from the Crypt* and for a publication that long outlived the company's other titles, *Mad* magazine. But during its heyday in the early 1950s, EC was also an

early innovator in another genre of comics: the so-called "preachies," socially conscious stories that boldly challenged the conservatism and conformity of Eisenhower-era America. EC Comics examines a selection of these works--sensationally-titled comics such as "Hate!," "The Guilty!," and "Judgment Day!"--And explores how they grappled with the civil rights struggle, antisemitism, and other forms of prejudice in America. Putting these socially aware stories into conversation with EC's better-known horror stories, Qiana Whitted discovers surprising similarities between their narrative, aesthetic, and marketing strategies. She also recounts the controversy that these stories inspired and the central role they played in congressional hearings about offensive content in comics. The first serious critical study of EC's social issues comics, this book will give readers a greater appreciation of their legacy.

- Keywords: EC Comics, 1950's civil rights

“How Visual Narratives (Comics) Can Increase Literacy, Decrease Bias, and Highlight Stories of Social Justice.”

- Author(s): Jessica Motherwell McFarlane
- Full Citation: Motherwell McFarlane, Jessica. “How Visual Narratives (Comics) Can Increase Literacy, Decrease Bias, and Highlight Stories of Social Justice.” *Collected essays on learning and teaching* 12 (2019): 46–59.
- Abstract: How can creating a simple stick figure comic help us tell — and deeply listen to — true stories of social injustice and practice anti-oppression strategies? More specifically, how can creating a series of stick-figure comics help learners enhance their understanding of the Indigenous Peoples’ testimonies in the Truth and Reconciliation Report (TRC, 2015)? In my experience, stick-figure visual narratives can help participants tell stories of social injustices and practice ways that might restore right relations. In this paper, I provide a background story and a literature review in describing the rationale and method of using this approach to teach social justice concepts and rehearse pro-social interventions. I conclude with a detailed lesson plan for using the social-justice comics method for visually presenting the TRC 2015 report.
- Keywords: Stick-figure comics, indigenous peoples

“Zines for Social Justice: Adolescent Girls Writing on Their Own”

- Author(s): Barbara Guzetti and Margaret Gamboa
- Full Citation: Guzetti, Barbara J., and Margaret Gamboa. “Zines for Social Justice: Adolescent Girls Writing on Their Own.” *Reading research quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2004): 408–436.
- Abstract: Despite the popularity of self-published teen zines, few studies have been conducted of the adolescent girls who write and read them. Past research on teens' reading and writing shows that adolescents read and write along stereotypical or gendered lines. This study explores the out-of-school literacy practices of three adolescent girls who write and publish their own zine by writing against gender, race, and class stereotypes. The study identifies what motivates and enables these girls in writing differently on their own and describes how young women use and develop their literacy skills to enable them to form and express their identities. Methods of participant observation were used to address these questions. Findings have implications for

student-centered instruction by identifying relevant ways to engage adolescents in literacy activity.

- Keywords: Zines, adolescent girls, identity, literacy

The Ages of the Black Panther: Essays on the King of Wakanda in Comic Books

- Author(s): Joseph J. Darowski
- Full Citation: Darowski, Joseph J. *The Ages of the Black Panther: Essays on the King of Wakanda in Comic Books* / Edited by Joseph J. Darowski. Edited by Joseph J. Darowski. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2020.
- Abstract:
- Black Panther was the first black superhero in mainstream comic books, and his most iconic adventures are analyzed here. This collection explores Black Panther's place in the Marvel universe, focusing on the comic books. With topics ranging from the impact apartheid and the Black Panther political party had on the comic to theories of gender and animist imagery, these essays analyze individual storylines and situate them within the socio-cultural framework of the time period they were created, drawing connections that deepen understanding of both popular culture and the movements of society. Supporting characters such as Everett K. Ross and T'Challa's sister Shuri are also considered. From his first appearance in 1966 by Jack Kirby and Stan Lee up through the character's recent adventures by Ta-Nehisi Coates and Brian Stelfreeze, more than fifty years of the character's history are addressed.
- Keywords: Black Panther, apartheid, Black Panther Party

“Creating Comics to Address Well-Being and Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic”

- Author(s): Kathryn West, Karen R. Jackson, Tobias L. Spears, and Brian Callender
- Full Citation: West, Kathryn, Karen R. Jackson, Tobias L. Spears, and Brian Callender. “Creating Comics to Address Well-Being and Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *Health promotion practice* 24, no. 1 (2023): 26–30.
- Abstract: In this descriptive case series, we detail the theoretical basis, methodology, and impact of a small-scale pilot implementation of graphic medicine workshops as an innovative approach to well-being and resilience in the age of COVID-19 and increasing awareness of racial injustice. The data provided in this article are anecdotal and based on participation in the workshops. Images created during the workshops are also shared as examples of the types of reflection that graphic medicine can enable. The workshops themselves were designed collaboratively and are based on the theoretical principles of graphic medicine, narrative medicine, and racial and social justice. They were conducted as part of a larger wellness initiative and were offered to health care-focused faculty at our academic medical institution. Our findings suggest that this was a beneficial activity which helped participants to reflect and reconsider their experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic and surging awareness of racial injustice. Reflections also showed that drawings were correlated with ProQOL scores and may, in larger numbers, also help to mitigate or bring attention to issues of burnout in frontline providers. Drawings shared show the tremendous impact of COVID-19 and the simultaneous chaos and emptiness of practicing during dual pandemics. Our workshops engaged about 20 frontline health care providers and other health care faculty and highlight the utility of graphic medicine as a tool for building resilience and encouraging self-reflection. Further study is necessary, as

is more rigorous analysis of the relationship between the graphics created and the ability to recognize and mitigate burnout.

- Keywords: COVID-19, graphic medicine, racial injustice

“Webtoons to Promote Critical Thinking in Neo-Liberal South Korea: A Thematic Analysis of Awl Social Justice Themes”

- Author(s): Jinhee Choi
- Full Citation: Choi, Jinhee. “Webtoons to Promote Critical Thinking in Neo-Liberal South Korea: A Thematic Analysis of Awl Social Justice Themes.” *East Asian journal of popular culture* 4, no. 1 (2018): 111–127.
- Abstract: This article explores the use of South Korean webtoons, Songkot (meaning Awl), for informal adult learning through visual narratives and audience comments in the social, historic and academic context. Drawing on Newman's critical thinking and Giroux's critical public pedagogy, the study explicates how the Awl creates a discursive space for an unpublicized theme, unionization, through its narrative structures and audience discussion. The findings imply that Awl's major themes - critical thinking, empathy and social action - create informal adult learning opportunities for the public by increasing their conscious awareness of institutionalized oppressions. Awl also has the potential to promote critical thinking about commonly unvoiced issues of social justice in neo-liberal South Korea.
- Keywords: popular culture, public pedagogy, unionization, informal learning, SouthKorea, webtoon

Graphic Justice : Intersections of Comics and Law / Edited by Thomas Giddens

- Author(s): Thomas Giddens
- Full Citation: Giddens, Thomas. *Graphic Justice : Intersections of Comics and Law / Edited by Thomas Giddens*. Edited by Thomas Giddens. First issued in paperback in 2016. London ;: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016.
- Abstract: Establishing the medium of graphic fiction as a critical resource for interdisciplinary legal studies, this collection is the first to address the intersection of comics and law. Graphic fiction has gained enormous cultural capital and academic interest over recent years. Comics-inspired films fill our cinemas and superhero merchandise fills the shelves of supermarkets. In short, our culture is suffused with a comic book aesthetic: as, for example, the Occupy movement appropriates the mask of V, from the comic work V for Vendetta; and, tragically, as James Holmes murderous rampage through a Colorado movie theatre, seemingly sees him styling himself after Batman's arch nemesis, the Joker. From mass entertainment and consumerism to political activism and violence, we are surrounded by emanations of graphic storytelling. Meanwhile, the rise of academic disciplines such as comics studies demonstrates that the medium contains much more depth than the common assumption of its simplicity and juvenility might suggest. Against this background, comics offer an important resource for making sense of the contemporary place and role of law.
- Keywords: Interdisciplinary Legal Studies, political activism, political violence

“A (Graphic) Novel Idea for Social Justice: Comics, Critical Theory, and A Contextual Graphic Narratology”

- Author(s): Karly Marie Grice
- Full Citation: Grice, Karly Marie. "A (Graphic) Novel Idea for Social Justice: Comics, Critical Theory, and A Contextual Graphic Narratology". *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*, 2017.
- Abstract: In my dissertation, I develop a combination of structural and critical theories for the medium-specific analysis of comics for children and young adults. I begin by laying a historical foundation of the medium of comics and a visual culture analytic framework to delineate my specific methodology of research, a contextualized graphic narratology. As of the writing of this dissertation, this work is the only extended, single-authored exploration into the construction and implications of comics for children and young adults. Within the following chapters, I combine the medium specific tools of a formalist comics study with the field-based knowledge of the function of children's and young adult narratives. I use these combined analytic tools to not only further the growth of a new comics scholarship but also to investigate how comics for children and young adults are using the implied reader to push the boundaries of the definition of "child." Looking at two comics series for young readers, *Lumberjanes* and the *March* trilogy, I explore how what I call tools of disruption are woven into the visual constructions in order to play with reader's experiences and expectations, provoke them into questioning the texts they are reading and the world around them, and push them to lay the foundation for imagined alternatives. I conclude by discussing the importance of my framework as a means of generative dialogic interdisciplinarity in the fields of children's literature, literacy education, and youth culture studies in their efforts to teach, read, and write for social justice.
- Keywords: Children's and young adult narratives, literacy, gender, civil rights

"Teaching Critical Looking: Pedagogical Approaches to Using Comics as Queer Theory"

- Author(s): Ashley Manchester
- Full Citation: Manchester, Ashley. "Teaching Critical Looking: Pedagogical Approaches to Using Comics as Queer Theory." *SANE journal* 2, no. 2 (2017).
- Abstract: Given the challenging depth of queer theoretical concepts, this article argues that one of the most effective ways to teach the complexities of queer theory is by utilizing comics in the classroom. I focus on how college-level instructors can use the content, form, and history of comics to teach students how to enact and do queer theory. By reading and making comics, students learn concrete and theoretical tools for combatting oppressive discourses and modes of meaning making. Teaching comics as queer theory promotes both innovative critical thinking and critical looking skills by centralizing both the rich history of queer comics and the queer potentiality of the form itself in class activities and discussions. Detailing specific lessons and analyzing comics such as Shaun Tan's "The Arrival," Ted Naifeh and Tristan Crane's "How Loathsome," and Alison Bechdel's "Dykes to Watch Out For," I examine three main ways that comics can provide unique contributions to queer theory pedagogical practices: by encouraging students to engage with the politics of representation, by teaching them to examine the queer potentiality of the form and function of comics structures, and by providing students with opportunities to envision queer time and space through comics architecture. The value of using comics as queer theory extends beyond the classroom to motivate

students and educators alike to critically engage with the overlapping relationships between aesthetic, narrative, and social worlds.

- Keywords: Queer theory, comics in the classroom

Muslim Superheroes : Comics, Islam, and Representation

- Author(s): David A. Lewis and Martin Lund
- Full Citation: Lewis, A. David, and Martin Lund. *Muslim Superheroes : Comics, Islam, and Representation / Edited by A. David Lewis and Martin Lund*. Edited by A. David Lewis and Martin Lund. Boston, Massachusetts: Ilex Foundation, 2017.
- Abstract: The roster of Muslim superheroes in the comic book medium has grown over the years, as has the complexity of their depictions. *Muslim Superheroes* tracks the initial absence, reluctant inclusion, tokenistic employment, and then nuanced scripting of Islamic protagonists in the American superhero comic book market and beyond. This scholarly anthology investigates the ways in which Muslim superhero characters fulfill, counter, or complicate Western stereotypes and navigate popular audience expectations globally, under the looming threat of Islamophobia. The contributors consider assumptions buried in the very notion of a character who is both a superhero and a Muslim with an interdisciplinary and international focus characteristic of both Islamic studies and comics studies scholarship. *Muslim Superheroes* investigates both intranational American racial formation and international American geopolitics, juxtaposed with social developments outside U.S. borders. Providing unprecedented depth to the study of Muslim superheroes, this collection analyzes, through a series of close readings and comparative studies, how Muslim and non-Muslim comics creators and critics have produced, reproduced, and represented different conceptions of Islam and Muslimness embodied in the genre characters
- Keywords: Islamophobia, Muslim superheros

“Increasing Understanding and Social Acceptance of Individuals With Disabilities Through Exploration of Comics Literature”

- Author(s): Ewa McGrail and Alicja Reiger
- Full Citation: McGrail, Ewa, and Alicja Rieger. “Increasing Understanding and Social Acceptance of Individuals With Disabilities Through Exploration of Comics Literature.” *Childhood education* 92, no. 1 (2016): 36–49.
- Abstract: Research supports the inclusion of children with disabilities in general education classrooms as a way to boost academic and social development, not only for children with disabilities, but also for typically developing children. A wide variety of perspectives and abilities in the classroom builds empathy, understanding, and creativity—all critical skills for children and adults learning, living, and working in increasingly diverse communities. Instead of deficit thinking about individuals with disabilities (considering them only in terms of what they cannot do), current best practices around the world call for a strengths-based approach. All children have the right to a quality education, and separate facilities do not guarantee equitable treatment. In this article, the authors explore the benefits of a classroom study of comics literature featuring characters with disabilities in terms of classroom behavior, learning, and social skills building. In outlining specific classroom activities and linking them to learning objectives, the authors show that comics literature and disability awareness/advocacy can

be easily incorporated into existing curricula to support positive classroom experiences and overall learning.

- Keywords: Disability awareness, teaching children with disabilities

“Radical Lessons in the Wake of Black Lives Matter”

- Author(s): Julia Miele Rodas
- Full Citation: Rodas, Julia Miele. “Radical Lessons in the Wake of Black Lives Matter.” *Radical teacher (Cambridge)* 115, no. 115 (2019): 48–63.
- Abstract: This graphic essay focuses on the use of graphic composition strategies and includes work by contributing authors from my community college composition classroom. The main point of this piece is that everyone deserves access to important ideas and information and that using comics to teach and to learn disciplines us to pare away the nonessential and prioritize foundational content. Pictures and emphatic word-art help clarify complex concepts for many who might otherwise struggle to master challenging written text. For these people, comics can provide a point of entry to discourse to which they might otherwise have had only marginal access. The exercise discussed in this graphic essay disentangles students from the pressures of performing conventional standards of (white) literacy while providing an avenue into antiracist reasoning and the discourse of public intellectuals of color.
- Keywords: Black Lives Matter, comics and teaching

“Follow the River of Stories: Comics, Folk Culture, and Social Justice in Delhi”

- Author(s): Jeremy Stoll
- Full Citation: Stoll, Jeremy. “Follow the River of Stories: Comics, Folk Culture, and Social Justice in Delhi”. *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*, 2012.
- Abstract: Follow the River of Stories illustrates the importance of visual narratives as a form of social commentary on development and social injustice in contemporary India, which is the world's fourth largest producer of comic books and graphic novels. Little research has been done on India's thriving comics culture, beyond several studies of the series Amar Chitra Katha, or Immortal Picture Stories, which only published regularly until the late 1980's. In contrast, this study focuses on the recent rise of graphic novels through the lens of one artists' group, the Pao Collective, who argue for comics as an independent art form. In the process, I demonstrate the power of these visual narratives through an ethnographic approach utilizing participant observation and in-depth interviews. Accordingly, this research is based upon fieldwork performed in 2010, during which I interviewed and worked with artists, writers, editors, publishers, and readers in New Delhi. Grounded throughout by the voices of Pao's members, I investigate how Delhi's comics creators push for a reorientation of communities around local contexts and increasing social awareness. I begin by historicizing the comics medium in India, and then work toward a definition of comics built upon the experiences and critical responses of individual creators. I then explore how these creators construct their narratives through appeals to folk culture in order to build and sustain community. Finally, I point out how these artists and authors are able to increase social awareness through their storytelling, with a focus on environmental issues in particular. My dissertation thus links social resistance to the creation of visual narratives and communities that organize around those stories. Accordingly, my work shows the importance of interdisciplinary scholarship in

understanding how communities engage with globalization and social and environmental injustice.

- Keywords: Asian Studies, India

Black Comics : Politics of Race and Representation

- Author(s): Sheena C. Howard and Ronald L. Jackson
- Full Citation: Howard, Sheena C., and Ronald L. Jackson. *Black Comics : Politics of Race and Representation / Edited by Sheena C. Howard and Ronald L. Jackson II*. Edited by Sheena C. Howard and Ronald L. Jackson. London ;: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2013.
- Abstract: Bringing together contributors from a wide-range of critical perspectives, *Black Comics: Politics of Race and Representation* is an analytic history of the diverse contributions of Black artists to the medium of comics. Covering comic books, superhero comics, graphic novels and cartoon strips from the early 20th century to the present, the book explores the ways in which Black comic artists have grappled with such themes as the Black experience, gender identity, politics and social media.
- Keywords: Black comics, gender identity, social media

Drawing New Color Lines : Transnational Asian American Graphic Narratives

- Author(s): Monica Chiu
- Full Citation: Chiu, Monica. *Drawing New Color Lines : Transnational Asian American Graphic Narratives / Edited by Monica Chiu*. Edited by Monica Chiu. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015.
- Abstract: The global circulation of comics, manga, and other such visual mediums between North America and Asia produces transnational meanings no longer rooted in a separation between 'Asian' and 'American.' *Drawing New Color Lines* explores the culture, production, and history of contemporary graphic narratives that depict Asian Americans and Asians. It examines how Japanese manga and Asian popular culture have influenced Asian American comics; how these comics and Asian American graphic narratives depict the 'look' of race; and how these various representations are interpreted in nations not of their production. By focusing on what graphic narratives mean for audiences in North America and those in Asia, the collection discusses how Western theories about the ways in which graphic narratives might successfully overturn derogatory caricatures are themselves based on contested assumptions; and illustrates that the so-called odorless images featured in Japanese manga might nevertheless elicit interpretations about race in transnational contexts. With contributions from experts based in North America and Asia, *Drawing New Color Lines* will be of interest to scholars in a variety of disciplines, including Asian American studies, cultural and literary studies, comics and visual studies
- Keywords: Asian Americans, manga

Keeping It Unreal : Black Queer Fantasy and Superhero Comics

- Author(s): Darieck Scott
- Full Citation: Scott, Darieck. *Keeping It Unreal : Black Queer Fantasy and Superhero Comics / Darieck Scott*. New York: New York University Press, 2022.

- Abstract: *Keeping It Unreal: Black Queer Fantasy and Superhero Comics* explores how fantasy—especially superhero comics, which are usually derided as naïve and childish—is a catalyst for engaging the black radical imagination. Such engagements prompt 'fantasy-acts' against antiblackness, a transgressive way of 'reading' beyond the comic-book page to envision and to experience alternate, and potentially more just, realities. Fantasies about superhero characters are not just or even primarily forms of escape, the author argues, but are active reshapings of readers and their worlds. This book offers a rich meditation on the relationship between fantasy and reality, and between the imagination and being, as it weaves Scott's personal recollections of his encounters with superhero comics with interpretive readings of figures like the Black Panther, Luke Cage, Nubia, and Blade, and theorists such as Frantz Fanon, Eve Sedgwick, Leo Bersani, Saidiya Hartman, and Gore Vidal
- Keywords: Black comics, queer studies

Uncanny Bodies : Superhero Comics and Disability

- Author(s): Scott Thompson Smith and José Alaniz
- Full Citation: Smith, Scott Thompson, and José Alaniz. *Uncanny Bodies : Superhero Comics and Disability / Edited by Scott T. Smith and José Alaniz*. Edited by Scott Thompson Smith and José Alaniz. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019.
- Abstract: Superhero comics reckon with issues of corporeal control. And while they commonly deal in characters of exceptional or superhuman ability, they have also shown an increasing attention and sensitivity to diverse forms of disability, both physical and cognitive. The essays in this collection reveal how the superhero genre, in fusing fantasy with realism, provides a visual forum for engaging with issues of disability and intersectional identity (race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality) and helps to imagine different ways of being in the world. Working from the premise that the theoretical mode of the uncanny, with its interest in what is simultaneously known and unknown, ordinary and extraordinary, opens new ways to think about categories and markers of identity, *Uncanny Bodies* explores how continuums of ability in superhero comics can reflect, resist, or reevaluate broader cultural conceptions about disability. The chapters focus on lesser-known characters—such as Echo, Omega the Unknown, and the Silver Scorpion—as well as the famous Barbara Gordon and the protagonist of the acclaimed series *Hawkeye*, whose superheroic uncanniness provides a counterpoint to constructs of normalcy. Several essays explore how superhero comics can provide a vocabulary and discourse for conceptualizing disability more broadly. Thoughtful and challenging, this eye-opening examination of superhero comics breaks new ground in disability studies and scholarship in popular culture.
- Keywords: Disability studies, intersectional identity

Keywords for Comics Studies

- Author(s): Ramzi Fawaz, Shelley Streeby, and Deborah Elizabeth Whaley
- Full Citation: Fawaz, Ramzi, Shelley Streeby, and Deborah Elizabeth Whaley. *Keywords for Comics Studies / Edited by Ramzi Fawaz, Shelley Streeby, and Deborah Elizabeth Whaley*. Edited by Ramzi Fawaz, Shelley Streeby, and Deborah Elizabeth Whaley. New York: New York University Press, 2021.

- Abstract: Across more than fifty essays, *Keywords for Comics Studies* provides a rich, interdisciplinary vocabulary for comics and sequential art, and identifies new avenues of research into one of the most popular and diverse visual media of the twentieth and twenty-first century. In an original twist on the NYU Keywords mission, the terms in this volume combine attention to the unique aesthetic practices of a distinct medium, comics, with some of the most fundamental concepts of the humanities broadly. Readers will see how scholars, cultural critics, and comics artists from a range of fields-including media and film studies, queer and feminist theory, and critical race and transgender studies among others-take up sequential art as both an object of analysis and a medium for developing new theories about embodiment, identity, literacy, audience reception, genre, cultural politics and more. To do so, *Keywords for Comics Studies* presents an array of original and inventive analyses of terms central to the study of comics and sequential art, but traditionally siloed in distinct lexicons: these include creative or aesthetic terms like Ink, Creator, Border, and Panel; conceptual terms like trans*, disability, universe, and fantasy; genre terms, like Zine, Pornography, Superhero, and Manga; and canonical terms like X-Men, Archie, Watchmen and Love and Rockets. Written as much for students and lay readers as professors and experts in the field, *Keywords for Comics Studies* revivifies the fantasy and magic of reading comics in its kaleidoscopic view of the field's most compelling and imaginative ideas
- Keywords: Keywords

Good White Queers? : Racism and Whiteness in Queer U.S. Comics

- Author(s): Kai Linke
- Full Citation: Linke, Kai. *Good White Queers? : Racism and Whiteness in Queer U.S. Comics* / Kai Linke. Bielefeld: transcript-Verlag, 2021.
- Abstract: How do white queer people portray our own whiteness? Can we, in the stories we tell about ourselves, face the uncomfortable fact that, while queer, we might still be racist? If we cannot, what does that say about us as potential allies in intersectional struggles? A careful analysis of *Dykes To Watch Out For* and *Stuck Rubber Baby* by queer comic icons Alison Bechdel and Howard Cruse traces the intersections of queerness and racism in the neglected medium of queer comics, while a close reading of Jaime Cortez's striking graphic novel *Sexile/Sexilio* offers glimpses of the complexities and difficult truths that lie beyond the limits of where white queer self-representations dare to tread.
- Keywords: Racism, queer studies

'Corpses ... Coast to Coast!' Trauma, Gender, and Race in 1950s Horror Comics

- Author(s): Philip Smith and Michael Goodrum
- Full Citation: Smith, Philip, and Michael Goodrum. "'Corpses ... Coast to Coast!' Trauma, Gender, and Race in 1950s Horror Comics." *Literature compass* 14, no. 9 (2017): 15–n/a.
- Abstract: During the 1950s, a moral panic around youth culture and delinquency dominated the contemporary imagination. Rock n' roll and the new wave of youth-focused films seemed to critics to posit an alternative culture antagonistic to that of older generations. One cultural form sparked particular censorious intent: the horror comic book. Many critics of the 1940s and 1950s dwelt obsessively on the impact of

horror comics on youthful readers. The culmination of this movement was the 1954 Senate Subcommittee Hearings on Juvenile Delinquency, which resulted in the implementation of a harsh new self-regulatory comics code and the end of the horror and crime genres. In this study, we argue that rather than (or perhaps as well as) promoting juvenile delinquency, horror comics served an important social function in that they presented a challenge to the dominant culture in cold war America. They corroborated the veteran experience; questioned faith in science and industry; recognised women as victims of war; and embodied, on occasion, many of the themes of the early Civil Rights movement. It was because of these countercultural impulses that the horror genre in comics was, ultimately, brought to an untimely end.

- Keywords: Gender studies, civil rights, 1950's comics

This Is Our Enemy: The Writers' War Board and Representations of Race in Comic Books, 1942–1945

- Author(s): Paul Hirsch
- Full Citation: Hirsch, Paul. "This Is Our Enemy: The Writers' War Board and Representations of Race in Comic Books, 1942–1945." *Pacific historical review* 83, no. 3 (2014): 448–486.
- Abstract: During World War II, the U.S. government, through the Writers' War Board (WWB), co-opted comic books as an essential means of disseminating race-based propaganda to adult Americans, including members of the armed forces. Working with comic creators, the WWB crafted narratives supporting two seemingly incompatible wartime policies: racializing America's enemies as a justification for total war and simultaneously emphasizing the need for racial tolerance within American society. Initially, anti-German and anti-Japanese narratives depicted those enemies as racially defective but eminently beatable opponents. By late 1944, however, WWB members demanded increasingly vicious comic-book depictions of America's opponents, portraying them as irredeemably violent. Still, the Board embraced racial and ethnic unity at home as essential to victory, promoting the contributions of Chinese, Jewish, and African Americans.
- Keywords: Racial propaganda, World War II

Black Women in Sequence : Re-Inking Comics, Graphic Novels, and Anime

- Author(s): Deborah Elizabeth Whaley
- Full Citation: Whaley, Deborah Elizabeth. *Black Women in Sequence : Re-Inking Comics, Graphic Novels, and Anime / Deborah Elizabeth Whaley*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016.
- Abstract: Black Women in Sequence takes readers on a search for women of African descent in comics subculture. From the 1971 appearance of the Skywald Publications character 'the Butterfly'--the first Black female superheroine in a comic book--to contemporary comic books, graphic novels, film, manga, and video gaming, a growing number of Black women are becoming producers, viewers, and subjects of sequential art. As the first detailed investigation of Black women's participation in comic art, Black Women in Sequence examines the representation, production, and transnational circulation of women of African descent in the sequential art world. In this groundbreaking study, which includes interviews with artists and writers, Deborah Whaley suggests that the treatment of the Black female subject in sequential art says

much about the place of people of African descent in national ideology in the United States and abroad.

- Keywords: Black studies, women's studies

Comics and the U.S. South

- Author(s): Brannon Costello and Qiana J. Whitted
- Full Citation: Costello, Brannon, and Qiana J. Whitted. *Comics and the U.S. South / Edited by Brannon Costello and Qiana J. Whitted*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012.
- Abstract: *Comics and the U.S. South* offers an extensive and long-overdue assessment of how life and culture in the United States South is represented in serial comics, graphic novels, newspaper comic strips, and web comics. Diverting the lens of comics studies from the skyscrapers of Superman's Metropolis or Chris Ware's Chicago to the swamps, back roads, small towns, and cities of the U.S. South, this collection critically examines the pulp genres associated with mainstream comic books alongside independent and alternative comics. Some essays seek to discover what Captain America can reveal about southern regionalism and how slave narratives can help us reread Swamp Thing; others examine how creators such as Walt Kelly (Pogo), Howard Cruse (Stuck Rubber Baby), Kyle Baker (Nat Turner), and Josh Neufeld (A.D.: New Orleans after the Deluge) draw upon the unique formal properties of the comics to question and revise familiar narratives of race, class, and sexuality; and another considers how southern writer Randall Kenan adapted elements of comics form to prose fiction. With essays from an interdisciplinary group of scholars, *Comics and the U.S. South* contributes to and also productively reorients the most significant and compelling conversations in both comics scholarship and in southern studies
- Keywords: Regionalism, racial studies, gender studies, social class

Monstrous Women in Comics

- Author(s): Samantha Langsdale and Elizabeth Rae Coody
- Full Citation: Langsdale, Samantha, and Elizabeth Rae Coody. *Monstrous Women in Comics / Edited by Samantha Langsdale and Elizabeth Rae Coody*. Edited by Samantha Langsdale and Elizabeth Rae Coody. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2020.
- Abstract: Monsters seem to be everywhere these days, in popular shows on television, in award-winning novels, and again and again in Hollywood blockbusters. They are figures that lurk in the margins and so, by contrast, help to illuminate the center—the embodiment of abnormality that summons the definition of normalcy by virtue of everything they are not. Samantha Langsdale and Elizabeth Rae Coody's edited volume explores the coding of woman as monstrous and how the monster as dangerously evocative of women/femininity/the female is exacerbated by the intersection of gender with sexuality, race, nationality, and disability. To analyze monstrous women is not only to examine comics, but also to witness how those constructions correspond to women's real material experiences. Each section takes a critical look at the cultural context surrounding varied monstrous voices: embodiment, maternity, childhood, power, and performance. Featured are essays on such comics as Faith, Monstress, Bitch Planet, and Batgirl and such characters as Harley Quinn and Wonder Woman. This volume probes into the patriarchal

contexts wherein men are assumed to be representative of the normative, universal subject, such that women frequently become monsters

- Keywords: Women's studies, monsters