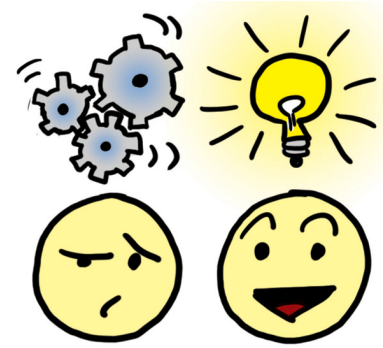


LIGN 118: The Language of Comics

UC San Diego • Spring 2013



Instructor:
Neil Cohn

Contact
neilcohn@visuallanguagelab.com

What this class is about:

How do our minds and brains understand drawings and the sequential images in comics? This course explores the structure of the visual language of "comics" by situating the capacity for creating graphic images within the traditions of the linguistic, psychological, and cognitive sciences. The primary notion is the idea that drawings and sequential images are structured in the same way as language. Not only will this class make connections between graphics and other communicative systems like spoken and signed languages, but students will leave with an appreciation for a diverse range of linguistic principles and cognitive science research.

What this class is not about:

This course will not include discussion of stories, genres, history, or culture of comics in America or across the globe. We won't be doing any sort of literary or sociological analyses.

Required Texts:

The Visual Language of Comics by Neil Cohn (VLOC)
Assorted readings posted on Ted

Grading assessment:

50% — 7 Homework assignments (lowest homework grade will be dropped)
20% — 1 Take home midterm (Covers material through 2/11/14)
26% — 1 Take home final exam (Comprehensive)
4% — Experimental Participation or Research Paper

LIGN 118: THE LANGUAGE OF COMICS — COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic and Readings	Hmwk Due
1	Tues 1/7	<i>Introduction and framing of the issues</i>	
	Thurs 1/9	<i>What is (Visual) Language?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC, Chapter 1 • Saussure. 1915. <i>Course on General Linguistics</i>. • Chomsky. 1986. <i>Knowledge of Language</i> 	
2	Tues 1/14	<i>Semiotics and writing systems</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC, Intro to Section 1 • Cohn. Semiotics • Cohn. Writing and Graphic signs 	HWK 1
	Thurs 1/16	<i>Australian sand narratives</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilkins. 1997. Alternative Representations of Space • Green. Multimodal complexity in Arandic sand story narratives. 	
3	Tues 1/21	<i>Graphic structure: The structure of drawing</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn. 2012. Explaining “I can’t draw.” pp.167-179 • Wilson. The Artistic Tower of Babel 	HWK 2
	Thurs 1/23	<i>Spatial structures in visual language</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn. Spaces of Places • Majid, et. al. 2004. Can language restructure cognition? • Wang and Spelke. 2002. Human spatial representation. 	
4	Tues 1/28	<i>Learning to draw, and Art vs. Language</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn. 2012. Explaining “I can’t draw.” pp.179-192 • Cohn. 2014. Framing “I can’t draw.” 	HWK 3
	Thurs 1/30	<i>Visual lexicon part 1: Visual Morphology</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC, Chapter 2 	
5	Tues 2/4	<i>Visual lexicon part 2: Panels and constructions</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC, Chapter 3 	HWK4
	Thurs 2/6	<i>Categorization and “cartoonification”</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levitin, Daniel. 2006. <i>This is your brain on music</i> pp.136-150 • McCloud, Scott. <i>Understanding Comics</i>, Chapter 2 	
6	Tues 2/11	<i>Metaphor, metonymy, and blending</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grady. 2010. Metaphor. <i>Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics</i>. • Forceville. 2012. Structural pictorial and multimodal metaphor. • (Optional) Lakoff. 1993. The contemporary theory of metaphor 	
	Thurs 2/13	<i>Visual narrative grammar: Transitions and low-level panel connections</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McCloud. 1993. <i>Understanding Comics</i>. Chapter 3 • Saraceni. 2001. Relatedness • Cohn. 2011. The limits of time and transitions 	
7	Tues 2/18	<i>Visual narrative grammar: Basic structures</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn. 2013. Visual narrative structures. • VLOC, Chapter 4, pp. 75-76, 83-85 	Midterm

	Thurs 2/20	<i>Visual narrative grammar: Complex patterns</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn. Complex narrative structure 	
8	Tues 2/25	<i>Visual narrative grammar: Cognition</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC, Chapter 6 • Nakazawa. 2005. Development of Manga (Comic Book) Literacy in Children. 	HWK 5
	Thurs 2/27	<i>Gestalt psychology External Compositional structure</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC, Chapter 5 • Wertheimer. [1923] Laws of Organization in Perceptual Forms. 	
9	Tues 3/4	<i>Multimodal interfaces: Speech & Gestures, Images & Text</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McNeill. 1992. Hand and Mind, Chapter 1 • Cohn. 2013. Beyond Word Balloons and Thought Bubbles. 	HWK 6
	Thurs 3/6	<i>Multimodality across domains</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn. Meaning in multiple modalities 	
10	Tues 3/11	<i>Cross-cultural comparison of visual language structure</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC Chapters 7, 8, 9 	HWK 7
	Thurs 3/13	<i>Visual language in the mind/brain and the world</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC Chapter 10 	