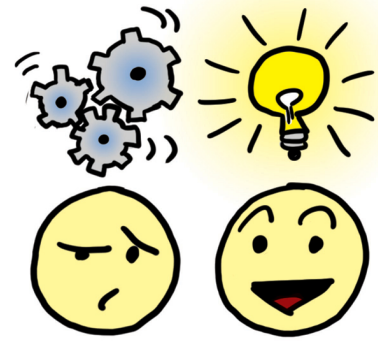


LIGN 118: The Language of Comics

UC San Diego • Fall 2015

MWF: 1-1:50pm
Location: WLH 2205



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 materials:

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

Grading assessment:

45% — 8 Homework assignments (lowest homework grade will be dropped)
15% — 1 Take home midterm (Covers material through 10/28/15)
25% — 1 Take home final exam (Comprehensive)
10% — In class participation (based on i>clickers)
5% — Experimental Participation or Research Paper

LIGN 118: THE LANGUAGE OF COMICS — COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic and Readings	Due
0	Fri 9/25	<i>Introduction and framing of the issues</i>	
1	Mon 9/28	<i>What is (Visual) Language? Part 1.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saussure. 1915. <i>Course on General Linguistics</i>. • Chomsky. 1986. <i>Knowledge of Language</i> 	
	Wed 9/30	<i>What is (Visual) Language? Part 2.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC, Chapter 1 	
	Fri 10/2	<i>Intro to Semiotics</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC, Intro to Section 1 • Cohn. Semiotics 	HWK 1
2	Mon 10/5	<i>Writing systems</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn. Writing and Graphic signs 	
	Wed 10/7	<i>Australian sand narratives</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilkins. Alternative Representations of Space • Green. Multimodal complexity in Arandic sand story narratives. 	
	Fri 10/9	<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. 	HWK 2
3	Mon 10/12	<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 	
	Wed 10/14	<i>Learning to draw</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn. 2012. Explaining “I can’t draw.” pp.179-192 	
	Fri 10/16	<i>Art vs. Language</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn. 2014. Framing “I can’t draw.” 	HWK 3
4	Mon 10/19	<i>Visual lexicon: Visual Morphology</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC, Chapter 2 	
	Wed 10/21	<i>Visual lexicon: Panels and constructions</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC, Chapter 3 	
	Fri 10/23	<i>Visual lexicon: A theory of visual morphology</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC, Chapter 3 	HWK4
5	Mon 10/26	<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 	
	Wed 10/28	<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 	
	Fri 10/30	<i>From visual lexicon to narrative grammar</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 	HWK5

6	Mon 11/2	<i>Visual narrative grammar: Basic categories</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn. 2013. Visual narrative structures. 	
	Wed 11/4	<i>Visual narrative grammar: Hierarchic structures</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC, Chapter 4, pp. 75-76, 83-85 	
	Fri 11/6	<i>Visual narrative grammar: Complex patterns</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn. Narrative conjunction's junction function 	<i>Midterm</i>
7	Mon 11/9	<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. 	
	Wed 11/11	VETERAN'S DAY HOLIDAY, NO CLASS	
	Fri 11/13	<i>External Compositional structure</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC, Chapter 5 • Wertheimer. [1923] Laws of Organization in Perceptual Forms. 	HWK 6
8	Mon 11/16	<i>Multimodal interfaces: Speech & Gestures</i> McNeill. 1992. Hand and Mind, Chapter 1	
	Wed 11/18	<i>Multimodal interfaces: Images & Text</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn. 2013. Beyond Word Balloons and Thought Bubbles. 	
	Fri 11/20	<i>Multimodality interactions</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn. A multimodal parallel architecture 	HWK 7
9	Mon 11/23	<i>Cross-cultural comparison of visual language lexicons</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC Chapters 7, 8, 9 	
	Wed 11/25	<i>Cross-cultural comparison of visual language grammars</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC Chapters 7, 8, 9 	
	Fri 11/27	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY, NO CLASS	
10	Mon 11/30	<i>The relationship between (visual) language and thought</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohn. Linguistic relativity and conceptual permeability 	HWK 8
	Wed 12/2	<i>Visual language in the mind/brain and the world</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOC Chapter 10 	
	Fri 12/4	<i>The architecture of (visual) language</i>	
		FINAL EXAM DUE ON WEDNESDAY 12/9	