

Final Graphic Short Story Project

VISUAL COMPONENT (70%)

Your assignment is to plan, design, and create a comic of at least ten panels that tells a story with a beginning, middle, climax and conclusion.

As with your first graphic assignment, the materials and media you use are up to you, but the simplest way to execute this assignment would be to use either a poster board or to create a book using blank paper and staples. Still--you are encouraged to be creative, and there are many ways to tell a story with words and pictures. For those of you who are not artistically inclined, don't forget the benefits of digital technology (digital photos, computer software) or collage (old magazines, newspaper, printed images).

1. Come up with a story (and don't forget the ending!)

Part of this assignment involves planning out your comic before you actually start drawing, so the first step is to come up with the story you want to tell. This might be the hardest part of the assignment, so don't leave it until the last minute. Consider first what genre of comic you want to create: funny, dramatic, biographical, autobiographical, political, fantasy, adventure, historical, documentary? Some other suggestions:

- borrow from your own life (some of today's most popular comics do not tell stories of drama and excitement, but rather they recount the mundane but poignant moments in daily life).
- revise the superhero genre, a la *Watchmen*.
- adapt a story from the newspaper: look for human interest stories or tell the story of an individual involved in a larger current event.

2. Sketch out a draft (create a basic storyboard version)

Once you have your story, consider the number of panels it will take to tell your story. This is a very subjective task, and is up to you. Obviously, the fewer the panels, the more creative you will have to be with closure.

Your draft does not have to include color or final text, but it should include the full number of panels, their shape/size (in relation to one another), and a rudimentary sketch of what will occur in each panel.

This is a really important stage because it will allow you to catch any problems with your story-telling and fix them before you begin your final version.

3. Create your comic

Of course, there are many steps involved in this particular part of the project, and they will vary according to your chosen media and presentation. Again, for those who are not artistically inclined, here are some ideas for the visual elements of your comic:

- digital photos
- magazine collage (consider using magazines to achieve the masking effect)
- stick figures
- abstraction (instead of using people, use abstractions of people, such as faces or circles with eyes)
- make the most of color, design, and words to avoid having to create realistic figures.

And, do not forget the power of color. While it certainly adds time to the process, the various ways you can manipulate meaning through color choices make it a hard element to pass over. There are a lot of ways to incorporate color into your comic without having to “color in” all your lines. Be creative.

WRITTEN COMPONENT (30%)

Your written component should be 1.5 pgs. long (typed, double-spaced), and its basic purpose is to analyze your own comic. In order to provide an analysis of your comic, you will provide reasoning for your design choices, your story sequencing, and your comic elements. I will be looking to see that you have utilized the vocabulary of comics in your analysis, so keep the following terms and concepts in mind:

“amplification through simplification”

“desperation device”

gutter

picture plane

polyptych

bleeding

closure

- moment-to-moment
- action-to-action
- subject-to-subject
- scene-to-scene
- aspect-to-aspect
- non-sequitur

word/picture combinations

- word specific
- picture specific
- duo-specific
- additive
- parallel
- montage
- interdependent

masking

subjective motion

motion lines or zip ribbons

panels (especially how shape and size communicate space and time)