

English 2265-090: Graphic Novels
Spring 2025
OH: By Appointment

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“WAKANDA FOREVER!”: THE LEGACY OF MARVEL’S BLACK PANTHER

Course Description: In 1966, Marvel Comics would debut an, at the time, unusual character for their growing lineup of superheroes: King T’Challa, ruler of a fictional, fabulously wealthy and technologically advanced African nation called Wakanda, better known by his customized alter-ego, *Black Panther*. He would not only be the first African superhero but the first black superhero from any publisher up until this point. Today, he is something of a household name, largely thanks to a particularly popular entry in Marvel Studios’ lucrative Cinematic Universe mega-franchise. But the character has undergone many iterations over the years in his comic book incarnation. Over the years, he has fended off colonial invaders, quelled civil wars within Wakanda’s borders, faced off against the Ku Klux Klan, and dealt with

the legacies of apartheid and genocide. He has been a ruler, a warrior, a diplomat, an educator, an inventor, and an explorer.

This class will explore the character's evolution over his 50+ year history. We'll examine his earliest appearances as a supporting character in the fledgling *Fantastic Four* and *Avengers* titles in the 1960s, his stint as the headline attraction of *Jungle Action* in the 1970s, and his reinvention under the pen of black writers and artists such as Christopher Priest, Denys McCowan, MacArthur Fellowship recipient Ta-Nehisi Coates, and Brian Stelfreeze from the 1990s onward, before ending with Ryan Coogler's justly celebrated film adaptation from 2018, and its sequel from 2022.

This course will also serve as a primer on the basics of comics scholarship. We will cover relevant aspects of the medium's history, its evolution over the last six decades with regard to storytelling conventions and techniques, as well as the narratological theories used by scholars of the medium to analyze it.

Required Reading and Viewing:

Texts (available at the campus bookstore):

- Bendis, Brian Michael, et al. *Avengers vs X-Men*.
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi, et al. *Black Panther, Vol. 1* (hardcover). ISBN-13: 978-1302904159
- Hudlin, Reginald, et al. *Black Panther by Reginald Hudlin: The Complete Collection, Vol 1*. ISBN-13: 978-1302907716
- Kirby, Jack, et al. *Black Panther Epic Collection: Revenge of the Black Panther*. ISBN-13: 978-1302915421
- Lee, Stan, et al. *Mighty Marvel Masterworks: The Black Panther Vol. 1: The Claws of the Panther*. ISBN-13: 978-1302947095
- Liss, David, et al. *Black Panther: The Man Without Fear - The Complete Collection*. ISBN-13: 978-1302907723
- Maberry, Jonathan, et al. *Black Panther: Doomwar*. ISBN-13: 978-1302904166
- McGregor, Don, et al. *Black Panther: Penguin Classics (Jungle Action # 6-22)*. ISBN-13: 978-0143135814
- McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. ISBN-13: 978-0060976255
- Priest, Christopher, et al. *Black Panther by Christopher Priest: The Complete Collection, Vol 1*. ISBN-13: 978-0785192671

Films (available for streaming on Disney+ and Amazon Prime):

- *Captain America: Civil War*, dirs. Anthony & Joe Russo
- *Black Panther*, dir. Ryan Coogler
- *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, dir. Ryan Coogler

Class Policies:

Participation: This online, asynchronous version of this course will require you to be organized, self-motivated, and diligent about hitting deadlines. While we will not be meeting in person, you will be expected to keep up with the assigned readings for each week and show up prepared to talk about them on the class discussion board. Failure to do so will result in a failing grade.

Texts: You are expected to have the assigned editions listed on the syllabus. We'll be referring to passages in class as part of our discussions and you'll be expected to follow along.

Syllabus Adjustments: You are expected to have completed the assigned reading for the day before class. We will stick primarily to the syllabus, but if I do make changes they will be announced in class and posted as an announcement on Canvas.

Course Content: Some of the required content contains representations of and arguments about bodies, sexuality, religion, race, and violence that may not reflect your personal or political views. Any or all of these moments, and their attendant controversies, are fodder for class discussion. Please consider this in your decision to take this course. If you have a concern, feel free to discuss it with me. For more information, consult the U's Accommodations Policy at <https://academic-affairs.utah.edu/wpcontent/uploads/sites/3/2015/03/accommodations-policy-background.pdf>

Students with Disabilities (ADA statement): *The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability & Access, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability & Access.*

Plagiarism: Is a bad idea. Moreover, University policy against it will be strictly enforced in this class. According to the [Student Code](#), plagiarism is defined as “the unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person’s work in, or as the basis for one’s own work offered for academic consideration or credit.” Any borrowings of others’ ideas, either in the form of direct quotations or paraphrases, must be properly cited parenthetically or in a footnote. Please note that official university policy against cheating and plagiarism also includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools without citation, documentation, or authorization. If you are determined to have plagiarized a paper, the penalty may range from a failing grade on the assignment in question or in the course, to suspension or expulsion from the University.

University Safety Statement: The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

Addressing Sexual Misconduct. Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil

rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677 (COPS).

English Department Diversity Statement: Literature and other related narrative forms allow us to imagine the lives of others and broaden our perspectives. How we talk about it together, in the physical or virtual classroom, is part of that process. Our diverse identities and experiences will inform and enhance those discussions. As we approach sometimes difficult topics, each member of the class is expected to foster a respectful, generous, and supportive classroom environment that makes room for productive difference and reasoned debate.

Grade Breakdown:

Lesson Responses: 75%

Comparison Paper: 25%

Lesson Responses: These occur twice a week (Tuesday/Thursday) and combine attendance and coursework. Think of them as virtual classroom meetings. You will respond to one of several prompts in the discussion thread.

Your posts should be roughly 250-350 words (about 2-3 substantial paragraphs). They should meaningfully engage with the reading for that day and should also include some close reading of a particular passage or scene that is relevant to your point.

You may find it helpful to include images from the comics themselves with your posts in order to better illustrate your points. I have included a handout on Canvas on how to do so. However, if you don't feel up to this, you can also describe the images on the page (a technique known as ekphrasis) to achieve a similar end.

Additionally, for each discussion, you are required to respond to at least one post by one of your classmates. These should be at least 50 words. Always address your classmates by name when responding to them. And please, always do so respectfully. Failure to do so will incur penalties.

Lesson responses are always due at 1 pm. If, for whatever reason, you are unable to make that deadline, I offer a 12-hour grace period—completely free of penalty. However, you are more than welcome to submit your posts early and doing so will probably increase the likelihood of your classmates responding to you.

IMPORTANT: Please compose all your responses in a word processor rather than typing them directly into the forum. Make sure that they are properly spellchecked and grammatically correct

before you post them. And include a word count along with the post. Failure to do so will count against you.

You are allowed to drop the lowest four (out of thirty) of these assignments over the course of the semester. This includes any missed classes as well. Any more missed responses than that will count against that section of your overall average.

Comparison Paper: Your final paper in this class will be a Comparative Analysis of two separate *Black Panther* runs in terms of their formal and/or thematic content.

It should include close readings of specific scenes from the texts in question in order to prove its argument. You may include properly cropped and resized images imbedded in the texts or to ekphrastically describe the imagery on the page in order to do so. All textual evidence should be properly cited MLA style.

This paper should be written in 12 pt, Times New Roman Font, double spaced, with page numbers, 1" margins, and citations in accordance with MLA format, including a Works Cited page. All papers must have a title, but no separate title page. Late papers will be deducted 3% for each calendar day late (e.g., an A paper could drop to an A-, an A- to a B+, and so on); they may be returned with fewer comments than those turned in on time.

Course Schedule:

- WEEK 1 Jan. 7: Introduction
 Jan. 9: McCloud, *Understanding Comics* (1993) [Chapters 1-4]
- WEEK 2 Jan. 14: McCloud, *Understanding Comics* (1993) [Chapters 5-9]
 Jan. 16: Lee & Kirby, *Fantastic Four* (1961) #52-53, & 56 [in *The Claws of the Panther*]
- WEEK 3 Jan. 21: Thomas & Buscema, *Avengers* (1962) # 62, 73-74 [in *The Claws of the Panther*]
 Jan. 23: McGregor & Buckler, *Black Panther: "Panther's Rage" or Jungle Action* (1972) # 6-11] [in *Penguin Classics*]
- WEEK 4 Jan. 28: McGregor & Buckler, *Black Panther: "Panther's Rage" or Jungle Action* # 12-18 [in *Penguin Classics*]
 Jan. 30: McGregor & Graham, "The Panther vs the Klan" or *Jungle Action* # 19-22 [in *Penguin Classics*]
- WEEK 5 Feb. 4: Kirby, *Black Panther: Revenge of the Black Panther* [issues 1-6]
 Feb. 6: Kirby, *Black Panther: Revenge of the Black Panther* [issues 7-12],
 Shooter, Hannigan, & Bingham [issue 13]
- WEEK 6 Feb. 11: Gillis & Cowan, *Black Panther* (1988) #1-4 in *Black Panther: Revenge of the Black Panther* [pp. 338-435]

Feb. 13: Priest & Texiera, *Black Panther: The Complete Collection by Christopher Priest – Volume 1* [issues 1-5]

- WEEK 7 Feb. 18: Priest & Jusko, *Black Panther: Priest* [issues 6-8]
Feb. 20: Priest, Manley, & Bright, *Black Panther: Priest* [issues 9-12]
- WEEK 8 Feb. 25: Hudlin & Romita, Jr., *Black Panther: The Complete Collection by Reginald Hudlin – Volume 1* [issues 1-6]
Feb. 27: Hudlin, Eaton, & Andrews, *Black Panther: Hudlin* [issues 10-13]
- WEEK 9 Mar. 3-7: SPRING BREAK
- WEEK 10 Mar. 10: Claremont & Byrne: *Marvel Team-Up* (1972) # 100 [in *Revenge of the Black Panther*]; Hudlin, Eaton, & Andrews, *Black Panther: Hudlin* [14-18]
Mar. 12: Maberry & Conrad, *Black Panther* (2009) # 7-12 [in *Black Panther: Doomwar*]
- WEEK 11 Mar. 17: Maberry & Eaton, *Black Panther: Doomwar* [issues 1-6]
Mar. 19: Liss & Francavilla, *Black Panther: The Man Without Fear* [#513-518]
- WEEK 12 Mar. 24: Liss & Francavilla, *Black Panther: The Man Without Fear* [#519-523]
Mar. 26: Bendis, et al., *Avengers vs X-Men* [#0-6]
- WEEK 13 Apr. 1: Bendis, et al., *Avengers vs X-Men* [#7-12]
Apr. 3: Coates & Stelfreeze, *Black Panther* (2016) [issues 1-4]
- WEEK 14 Apr. 8: Coates & Stelfreeze, *Black Panther* (2016) [issues 5-8]
Apr. 10: Coates & Stelfreeze, *Black Panther* (2016) [issues 9-12]
- WEEK 15 Apr. 15: Anthony & Joe Russo, *Captain America: Civil War* (2016)
Apr. 17: Coogler, *Black Panther* (2018)
- WEEK 16 Apr. 22: Coogler, *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* (2022)

Tuesday, April 29: Comparison Paper (1500-1800 words), due via Canvas by 11:59 PM