

**Literature and Popular Culture:  
Comics, Manga, Graphic Novels: Sequential Art**  
COLT 365, Class #22032R, Spring 2009, Mon and Wed, 3:30-4:50, THH 114  
Select One Discussion Section: Fridays at 11:00 or 12:00



Mass-reproduced words and images co-exist in their most dynamic form in the various traditions of comic books—such as *manga*, the cartoon strip, and the graphic novel. This class will read samples of these forms in detail and place them in their social and historical contexts. At the same time, we will consider theoretical and critical models for reading words and images together, and examine ideas of mass-reproducibility and models of narrative. We will also think about the larger questions of power, nationality, gender, mass culture, and ecology often presented as themes in *manga* and graphic novels.

This class should be of interest to anyone concerned with verbal and visual culture, popular forms, formations of national identity through mass culture, colonialism, the history of representation in the twentieth century, East-West cultural exchanges, Japanese aesthetics, and postmodernism. Of course, this class has a specific appeal to fans of comic books or to those who are curious about this vastly influential and widely popular contemporary art form. The class does not presume a prior familiarity with comics, just enthusiasm and an open mind.

The class will be divided into four sections: the first will examine how comics work; the second will explore how comics represent history and create historical and/or autobiographical fictions; the third will consider how comics concern themselves with apocalyptic themes and images; the fourth will analyze how comics stage images and fantasies of the animal and the non-human.

COLT L/M/CT Track: This is a Media Concentration Course.

**Professor Michael du Plessis**  
duplessi@usc.edu