



Graphic Novels, Comics, and More!  
Spring 2025 Syllabus

*Instructor: Barbara Glaeser*

*Coordinator: Jill Patterson*

Date	Topic	Readings
Feb. 6	Introduction to the new semester  Graphic Novel Memoir	<p><b><i>The Best We Could Do</i> by Thi Bui</b></p>  <div data-bbox="797 415 1495 846" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p><i>The Best We Could Do</i> is an intimate look at one family's journey from their war-torn home in Vietnam to their new lives in America. Bui documents the story of her family's daring escape after the fall of South Vietnam in the 1970s and the difficulties they faced building new lives for themselves. Reflecting on her role as new mother and a child of immigrants, she explores the anguish of war, poverty, displacement and immigration and the lasting effects these have on her family.</p> </div> <p>2017 National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist 2018 American Library Association Notable Books Selection 2018 American Book Award 2018 Eisner Nominee for Best Reality Based work</p>
Feb. 20	Graphic Novel Memoir	<p><b><i>What is Home Mum?</i> By Sabba Khan</b></p>  <div data-bbox="756 1108 1474 1535" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p>As a second-generation Pakistani immigrant living in East London, Sabba Khan paints a vivid snapshot of contemporary British Asian life and investigates the complex shifts experienced by different generations within immigrant communities, creating an uplifting and universal story that crosses borders and decades. Race, gender, and class are explored in a compelling personal narrative creating a strong feminist message of self-reflection and empowerment which is illuminated in stunning artwork.</p> </div>
March 6	Graphic Novel	<p><b><i>Guardian of Fukushima</i> by Ewen Blain and Fabien Grolleau</b></p>



On March 11, 2011, a massive earthquake triggered a devastating tsunami, which, in turn, destroyed the core three reactors of the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan. This tragedy cost almost 20,000 lives and devastated countless more, including Naoto Matsumura, a farmer evacuated from the deadly radiation zone. Unwilling to abandon his beloved animals, Naoto chooses to return home to his farm, rescuing and feeding any animal he found on the way, including an ostrich. This true story of “The Most Irradiated Man in Japan” is a touching story of bravery and kindness, and includes beautifully illustrated Japanese legends he uses to explain the forces of nature that destroyed so much, but also gave hope for resilience and recovery.

**2024 Independent Publishers Book Award**

March 20

Graphic Novel  
Memoir

***Memento Mori* by Tiitu Takalo**



In *Memento Mori*, a Latin phrase for “you must die,” celebrated Finnish graphic novelist Tiitu Takalo chronicles her sudden, unexpected cerebral hemorrhage and a life turned upside down overnight: a ruptured cerebral aneurysm, the days and nights spent in an intensive care unit, and the long, painful recovery that led the artist to reflect on her life both past and present. Much more than a story of survival, *Memento Mori* is a philosophical and psychological journey told with exceptional honesty and compassion. A deeply moving and insightful graphic novel from a master of the medium that is also

**2024 Eisner Award Nominee Best Graphic Novel**

**2024 Finlandia Prize for Comics**

**2024 Wieringo (Ringo) Comic Book Award nominee**

**2024 Pop Culture Classroom Excellence in Graphic Novels**

April 10

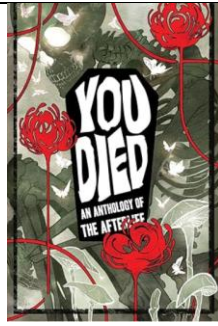
Graphic Novel

***The Many Deaths of Laila Starr* by Ram V and Filipe Andrade**



Humanity is on the verge of discovering immortality. As a result, the avatar of Death is cast down to Earth to live a mortal life in Mumbai as twenty-something Laila Starr. Struggling with her newfound mortality, Laila has found a way to be placed in the time and place where the creator of immortality will be born. Will Laila take her chance to stop mankind from permanently altering the cycle of life, or will death really become a thing of the past?

		<p><b>2022 Harvey Award</b></p>
<p>April 17</p>	<p>Graphic Novel</p>	<p><b><i>Nimona</i> by Noelle Stevenson (now known as ND Stevenson).</b>          (You may remember ND from the comic “Lumberjanes” that we read a while back).</p> <div data-bbox="735 170 1511 558" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>This book was suggested by Deanna and it is a lot of fun! The main character is an orphan, Nimona, who, after being on her own so long, has developed a knack for killing “bad guys.” Nimona wants desperately to be the “side-kick” to the knight Ballister Blackheart, who is singlehandedly battling an evil empire, and a former friend who is complicit in their evil deeds. Nimona and Ballister form an unlikely duo to fight for freedom and friendship, with an ending you won’t see coming. (Do you also think Nimona looks quite a lot like her creator?)</p> </div> <div data-bbox="453 573 730 953" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>2016 Cartoonist Studio Award Best Web Comic          2015 Eisner Nomination for Best Digital/Web Comic          2016 Eisner Award for Best Graphic Album</p>
<p>May 1</p>	<p>Graphic Novel:          focus on Raina Telegemeier</p> <div data-bbox="228 1173 396 1377" data-label="Image"> </div>	<p><b><i>Smile</i> by Raina Telegemeier</b></p> <div data-bbox="456 1138 777 1617" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="833 1098 1523 1575" data-label="Text" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>The autobiographical graphic novel <i>Smile</i> follows author Raina Telegemeier through her real-life experiences of having her teeth knocked out and the years of orthodontic work that follow during her early teen years. Because the story is true (although the names of the characters have been changed), not all of Raina's dilemmas are solved in the neatly wrapped-up way of most middle-grade novels, which may be disappointing to some readers. Although the cartoony drawings may indicate a light, fun story -- and there are certainly elements of that -- <i>Smile</i> is also a meaningful story of a teen's journey to self-acceptance.</p> </div> <p>2011 Eisner Award for Best Publication for Teens          2013 Intermediate Young Reader’s Choice Award</p> <p>and just for fun,  <b>“Funeral in Foam” by Casey Gilly and Raina Telegemeier</b>, in the anthology <b><i>You Died: An Anthology of the Afterlife.</i></b></p>



YOU DIED asked a wide array of cartoonist new bloods and all-stars to relate their most unforgettable tales of death and what comes next. Filled with beautifully illustrated accounts of grief and mourning, ancient myths, memorial rites around the globe, afterlife in the far reaches of space, and the simple and touching ways both the living and the dead carry on, this lively collection starts a comforting and much-needed dialogue about death as a natural part of life.

**2022 Eisner Award for Best Short Story**

**“Pearls Before Swine” by Stephen Pastis**

May 15

Comics: Focus on **Stephan Pastis**



*Pearls Before Swine* is a hilarious and often poignant comic. At its heart, **P** the comic strip tale of three friends: an arrogant **R**at who thinks he knows it all, a slow-witted **P**ig who doesn't know any better, and a Goat, the long-suffering philosopher, a thoughtful type who spends his days trying to comprehend the perplexities of existence and the mysteries of the world. Together, these characters offer commentary on society, ourselves, the crazy world we live in, and even the English Language.



Go to GoComics.com and search for the “Drabble” Comic. (If you would like, create an account so you can avoid the awful ads. Only \$9.99 a year!). Search for “Pearls Before Swine.” Read the most recent comics or search around-almost every strip is worth reading!

Pastis was nominated for the **National Cartoonists Society Newspaper Comic Strip Award for 2002, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2014**. He won the **2003, 2006, and 2014 awards**. He was also nominated for **The National Cartoonists Society Reuben Award for Cartoonist of the Year for every year since 2008, winning in 2018**.