Land Acknowledgement
We acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised and given to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Instructor Information
Instructor: Lindsay Meaning
Office Hours: Wednesday & Friday, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm on Discord, or by appointment.
* Appointments can be made through email or in the Discord office-hours-chat channel. *
Email: lmeaning@uwaterloo.ca

Course Description
In the decades since Superman burst onto the comic book scene, the superhero genre has achieved massive global popularity. Superheroes are everywhere: in film empires, television shows, amusement park attractions, video games, and more. With the enormous influence that superheroes have had on popular culture, it becomes important to examine the genre critically, so that we can understand the ways in which it both reflects and influences social and cultural mores. We will trace the figure of the superhero from earliest epics to the superhero blockbuster of the twenty-first century, considering varied cultural perspectives and forms such as poetry, comic books, film, and television. When we examine these superheroes, we will consider such questions as: How does the superhero embody (or question) the dominant social values of their place and time? How do superhero narratives address larger themes such as power, identity, and alienation? How do superheroes approach contemporary issues such as gender, race and sexuality? What purpose, if any, does the genre serve in how we live our lives? This course will address these issues and others, while also pushing students to develop their skills in critical analysis and academic writing. You will learn how to develop essay topics, how to construct powerful arguments, and how to support those arguments with research and evidence.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes
In this class, you will learn:

- To identify and describe the role of a superhero in a narrative
- To understand the conventions of the superhero genre and its cultural contexts
- To practice close reading in order to develop an argument about a text
- To develop a sophisticated critical vocabulary through text analysis
- To think critically and communicate effectively
- To engage in discussion with your peers to develop a sophisticated response to texts
- To develop your skills in academic writing and revision
Required Texts

- **The Superhero Reader.** Edited by Charles Hatfield et al.
  - E-Book: $30, available: Kindle, Kobo, Google Books
  - Paperback: $34.95, available: UWaterloo Bookstore
- **Beowulf: A New Translation** by Maria Headley.
- **Comics** (available on Comixology & elsewhere; links to be provided):
  - Superman (1939) #25
  - Wonder Woman (1942) #9
  - Thor (1966) #155
  - The Amazing Spider-Man (1963) #55
  - Watchmen: Chapter 1
  - Deadpool (1997) #1
  - Wonder Woman (2016) #27
  - She-Hulk (2005) #34
  - Green Lantern (1960) #87
  - Ms Marvel (2015) #4
  - Civil War (2006) #1
  - Black Panther (2005) #1
- **Films:**
  - The Dark Knight (dir. Christopher Nolan)
  - ($4.99 to rent on youtube; available on streaming services)

Course Requirements and Assessment

Every assignment that you submit to the dropbox should be carefully revised and polished. Assignments should be written in Times New Roman, 12 point font, MLA 8th Edition format with 1 inch margin. Please submit assignments in .docx or .pdf format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Date of Evaluation</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beowulf Analysis</td>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free Choice Superhero Argument</td>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper Proposal</td>
<td>November 13</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Discussion Summary</td>
<td>November 30</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparative Argument</td>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Discussions &amp; Activities</td>
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<td>30%</td>
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| Total                             |                     | 100%      |

Below, you will find brief descriptions of each assignment in the course; full details and rubrics will be posted to LEARN.
Beowulf Analysis – 10% (October 2)
2 – 3 Pages
In this assignment, you will write a critical analysis of Beowulf that is supported by evidence from the text. You will be provided with a list of possible topics or questions from which to construct your argument; you may choose one of these, or create your own topic after consulting with me.

Free Choice Superhero Argument – 20% (October 30)
3 - 4 Pages
In this assignment, you will select a comic book, tv show, film, or book (choose only one) that portrays a superhero character beyond the ones we are looking at in this class. You will briefly describe both this superhero and the particular text that they come from; however, the bulk of the paper will be your analysis of the text. You will write an argument that can be made about this particular text as a cultural product. Possible topics to consider include the place of the text within the superhero genre, its representation of gender or race, or the cultural anxieties or preoccupations that are revealed through the narrative - among others.

Paper Proposal – 5% (November 13)
1 Page
You will prepare and submit a formal proposal for your final paper. This proposal will include a statement of which two texts you are studying, a working draft of your thesis statement, an outline of the major arguments you intend to present, and a bibliography of at least two academic sources that you will use to support your argument.

Group Discussion Summary – 5% (November 30)
1 Page
In Week 11, your discussion group will select, by consensus, a single Marvel movie from a list of choices to be the object text of this week’s discussion. You will engage in a critical reading and discussion of this movie as a group, considering the narrative of the film, its place within the superhero genre, and its role as a cultural product. As a group, you will prepare a 1 -2 page document summarizing your discussion, which you will share with the rest of the class.

Comparative Argument – 30% (December 4)
5 – 6 Pages
For this essay, you will be asked to make an argument which compares two of the texts that we looked at during the term. You may compare two texts dealing with the same superhero or you may compare two texts featuring two different superheroes; you can choose to use two comic books, two films, or one of each. You are not to write on Beowulf for this essay. You will support the argument you make about these texts by drawing on at least two scholarly sources, either from The Superhero Reader or from outside research. Some possible topics to consider are how the texts reflect the context in which they are written, how the texts reinforce and/or challenge the status quo, how they reflect feminist points of view, or how they reflect conventional conceptions of masculinity.
Weekly Discussions – 30% (3% per week; lowest 2 weeks dropped)

In the beginning of the semester, you will be placed in a small discussion group with several of your peers. It is in these discussion groups that you will develop your readings and perspectives on the texts that we’ll be looking at over the course of the term, allowing you to engage fully with the course and your peers in an online space.

Each week, I will facilitate discussions and post several questions about the assigned readings; these questions will serve as discussion prompts, guiding you through critical analysis and provoking thought and questioning of your own. You will be assessed on the depth, thoughtfulness and originality of your discussion posts, your engagement with the week’s assigned readings, and the level to which you engage with the thoughts of your peers.

Course Outline

(Excellent in The Superhero Reader are identified with “SR” and page numbers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Comics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept. 7 - 13</td>
<td>What is a superhero?</td>
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<td>The Epic Hero and Pop Culture (SR, pp. 84-93)</td>
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<td>Death-Defying Heroes (SR, pp. 295-304)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Sept. 14 - 20</td>
<td>Ancient Heroes</td>
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<td>Beowulf, pp. 2 – 81. (Lines 1 – 1879)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sept. 21 - 27</td>
<td>Ancient Heroes II</td>
<td></td>
<td>Beowulf, pp. 81 – 135. (Lines 1880 – 3182)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sept. 28 – Oct. 4</td>
<td>Comic Book Superheroes: The Golden Age</td>
<td>Superman (1939) #25 Wonder Woman (1942) #9</td>
<td>The Superman Conceit (SR, pp. 46-52)</td>
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<td>Beowulf Analysis Due</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Oct. 26 – Nov. 1</td>
<td>Super Heroines</td>
<td>Marvel Divas #1 She-Hulk (2005) #34</td>
<td>Wonder Woman (SR, pp. 203-210)</td>
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<td>Superhero Argument Due</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Nov. 2 - 8</td>
<td>Race &amp; Representation</td>
<td>Green Lantern (1960) #87 Ms Marvel (2016) #4</td>
<td>Color Them Black (SR, pp. 252-268)</td>
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| 9    | Nov. 9 - 15 | Political Allegories & Social Commentary | Civil War (2006) #1  
Astonishing X-Men (2004) #3  
Black Panther (2005) #1    | Paper Proposal Due                                                      |
| 10   | Nov. 16 - 22| Superheroes on Screen                | The Dark Knight (Christopher Nolan)  
Batman TV Show                                                                | “As a Symbol I Can be Incorruptible” (on LEARN) |
| 11   | Nov. 23 - 29| The MCU Behemoth                     | Marvel Movie, to be chosen from a list by group consensus.            | “Time to Work for a Living” (on LEARN)        |
| 12   | Nov. 30 – Dec. 4 | Anime Superheroes: Magical Girls | Cardcaptor Sakura, Episode 1 (Free to watch on Crunchyroll)  
Puella Magi Madoka Magica, Episodes 1 & 2 (On Netflix, free to watch on Crunchyroll) | Comparative Argument Due                        |

**Late Work**
Late submissions will be penalized 2% per day late, including weekends. All three of the major assignments must be submitted in order to pass the course. Extensions may be given on an individual basis and may require documentation; please contact me as far in advance as possible if you require an extension.

**Institutional-required statements for undergraduate course outlines approved by Senate Undergraduate Council, April 14, 2009**

**Academic Integrity**
In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the Office of Academic Integrity webpage for more information.

**Discipline**
A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. Check the Office of Academic Integrity for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.
Grievance
A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals
A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 - Student Appeals.

Note for Students with Disabilities
The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (NH 1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Mental Health Support
All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

On Campus
- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 xt 32655
- MATES: one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from the Student Life Centre

Off Campus
- Good2Talk: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-433 ext. 6880
- Here 24/7: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- OK2BME: set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 ext. 213

Download UWaterloo and regional mental health resources (PDF)

Download the WatSafe app to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

Faculty of Arts-required statements for undergraduate course outlines

Cross-listed Course (if applicable)
Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.