

Syllabus for Reading/Arguing Comics

January–May 2024

Welcome!

In this course, we're going to hone **the subtle art of close reading** — which starts with enjoying the text, ends with *really* enjoying the text... and has some interesting stuff in between.

By the end of this course, you'll be a more confident speaker, a more inventive philosopher, know oodles of big words that'll scare adults, be cunning at building snowmen, win the Nobel Prize for Physiology, and conquer the country of Monaco.

Well, fingers crossed!

Oh, also you'll be a better reader... *no matter how good you currently are.*

And reading well is one of **the truly fundamental life skills**. (When you get really, really good at reading, your chances of taking over the Marshall Islands go way, way up. Just, y'know, if that's your thing...) The (optimistic) goal of this course is to help you become a more powerful human being...

The whole course is a machine, and the machine has four pieces: **love**, **curiosity**, **mastery**, and **memory**. In the first lesson, we'll get clear on what those mean, and precisely how we'll be doing them!

There *is* some homework before the first week — so **take a look!** (Frankly, feel free to take a peek at the rest of it, but you don't need to yet.)

Oh — shoot any questions to me (brandon@scienceisWEIRD.com) or Angela (angela@scienceisWEIRD.com).

Looking forward to seeing you in class!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandon". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Before our first lesson (on January 11)

You'll need the following books for this course:

- *The Essential Calvin & Hobbes*, by Bill Watterson
- *Bea Wolf*, by Zach Weinersmith
- *There's Treasure Everywhere*, by Bill Watterson
- *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, by Scott McCloud

You *don't* need to buy them all at once.

Poke around the books for a bit! Read some random strips. ENJOY THEM. (If you accidentally read a whole book, that's *great*.)¹

Week 14 (for class on January 11)

Love: in *Essential*, read pages **180–194** just for fun

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: nothing yet

Week 15 (for class on January 18)

Love: *Essential* pages **195–209**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: download Anki; each day, quiz the memory cards... if you're confused, [watch this video I made](#) on how to use Anki

Week 16 (for class on January 25)

Love: *Essential* pages **210–224**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 17 (for class on February 1)

Love: *Essential* pages **225–239**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

¹ Except *Bea Wolf*. I recommend holding off on "Fitts" 7, 8, and 9 until we get to them.

Week 18 (for class on February 8)

Love: *Essential* pages **240–(the back cover)**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 19 (for class on February 15)

Love: *Bea Wolf* **the front cover – page 63**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new *Bea Wolf* dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 20 (for class on February 22)

Love: *Bea Wolf* **pages 65 – 125**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new *Bea Wolf* dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 21 (for class on February 29 — *happy leap day!*)

Love: *Bea Wolf* **page 127 – the back cover**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new *Bea Wolf* dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 22 (for class on March 7)

Love: *There's Treasure Everywhere*, **the front cover – page 14**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 23 (for class on March 14)

Love: *There's Treasure Everywhere* **pages 15 – 29**

Love: *Understanding Comics* **chapter 1**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 24 (for class on March 21)

Love: *There's Treasure Everywhere* **pages 30 – 44**

Love: *Understanding Comics* **chapter 2**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 25 (for class on March 28)

Love: *There's Treasure Everywhere* **pages 45 – 59**

Love: *Understanding Comics* **chapter 3**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 26 (for class on April 4)

Love: *There's Treasure Everywhere*: **pages 60 – 74**

Love: *Understanding Comics* **chapter 4**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 27 (no class on April 11! Brandon's on vacation!)

Love: The simple joys of going on a cross-country road trip with your spouse and three *oh my gosh is this going to suck?*

More seriously: *There's Treasure Everywhere*: **pages 75 – 89**, even though we're not going to talk about them

Week 28 (for class on April 18)

Love: *There's Treasure Everywhere*: **pages 90 – 104**

Love: *Understanding Comics* **chapter 5**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 29 (for class on April 25)

Love: *There's Treasure Everywhere*: **pages 105 – 119**

Love: *Understanding Comics* **chapter 6**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 30 (for class on May 2)

Love: *There's Treasure Everywhere*: **pages 120 – 134**

Love: *Understanding Comics* **chapter 7**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 31 (for class on May 9)

Love: *There's Treasure Everywhere*: **pages 135 – 149**

Love: *Understanding Comics* **chapter 8**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 32 (for class on May 16)

Love: *There's Treasure Everywhere*: **pages 150 – 164**

Love: *Understanding Comics* **chapter 9**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Week 33 (for class on May 23, the last one!)

Love: *There's Treasure Everywhere*: **pages 165 – the back cover**

Curiosity: go back & underline all the words/phrases/references you don't understand

Mastery: quiz the new C&H dictionary for this week's pages

Memory: each day, quiz the memory cards

Links

Try a sample daily checklist: <https://tinyurl.com/3dt3tfaw>

Just in case you're lost.

Lesson recordings: [get the *real* syllabus to see these]

Here's where you can watch the recordings of "Reading Comics".

Anki: <https://apps.ankiweb.net/>

You can download Anki, the app that we'll be using for our flashcards. (It's free on Windows, OSX, and Android; it costs money for iOS.)

Flashcard decks: [get the *real* syllabus to see this]

This is the permanent link to where I'll be uploading each week's flashcard deck.

Video on how to use Anki: <https://youtu.be/hWkbb15m7iQ>

Yeah, I'm proud of this! But when you're confused, let me know. (Also, look at the next page.)

Some Anki tips

Want to let multiple kids use Anki? You can make different profiles!

(Recommendation: use a different email address to make each profile. Why? If you end up also using AnkiWeb, this may make everything *much* easier.)

Want to use your iPhone/iPad, but don't want to pay the money? You can do that! "AnkiWeb" is an online-only version... its only problem is that it can't *import* new decks. So if you do this, you'll need to juggle both. Just follow these steps:

1. download the free desktop version
2. on the desktop version, import the cards
3. set up a free account on [AnkiWeb](#)
4. on your desktop version of Anki, hit "sync"
5. tell it to connect to your account
6. sync your account
7. now, you can go to [AnkiWeb](#) on any computer, and use Anki!