

ART 438: RESEARCH PROJECT

(20% of your final grade)

For this assignment, you will need to purchase the following graphic novel:
Chris Ware, *Building Stories* (2012), ISBN: 0375424334

This is not an ordinary graphic novel or book, rather it is a series of different size books, pamphlets and ephemera created around the central theme of a building and space. Because of this, I do not suggest getting the book used, unless you can see it yourself and make sure that you have the entire item.

For this project, there are TWO parts:

1) *Building Stories* Review:

For this part, you will write a 4-5 page review of the book(s). No outside research is needed nor should any be consulted.

You should address the following questions:

- What is the author's main point? What is Ware trying to say with these books? (THIS should be your THESIS statement)
- How do the images relate to the text?
- Why does he use so many different books to create his larger project? Discuss at least THREE different objects from the set, one of which must be a longer "book." How do all of these texts/images create something coherent?
- Why is this a graphic novel? Why couldn't it just be a novel or just images?

REMEMBER: This is a formal paper and should NOT include "I," meaning this is not about your subjective view if you liked the book or not but rather a thoughtful analysis of the book itself.

Common Writing Errors:

- **Titles of artwork should be italicized.** Not in quotations. Not bold. *ITALICIZED.*
- Watch your use of THEIR/THERE/THEY'RE and IT'S/ITS. Do not use **contractions.**
- **Do not use "I".** Be confident, do not use "it seems..." or "I think."
- Remember this is a formal academic paper, and keep the appropriate tone.
- Make sure you have an **introduction** and **conclusion.** Your introduction often includes a Thesis statement, which makes clear the argument and theme you are going to introduce in your paper.
- Use paragraphs and indent them. **Three** sentences are needed for a paragraph, with each paragraph embodying a different theme/subject.
- Watch for fragments and run-on sentences – these are often caught by reading the paper out loud.
- Double check your use of punctuation. Commas cause the reader to pause, so when reading the paper, they often fit in the places where you naturally pause.
- **Avoid passive sentences** such as "The peach was eaten by the rat." Keep your sentences active, "The rat ate the peach."

2) Create your own Building Story inspired by Chris Ware's *Building Stories*

Choose a public building that you have access to (that is NOT on campus, and is not a house). You will need to be able to photograph it (at least on the exterior), as well as be able to go inside the building. Once you have chosen your building, photograph it and document it. Visit it at different times of day. Talk to different people who use the space. Study it. Take notes, sketches and photographs.

For this project, you will tell the building's story in whatever way you are comfortable:

- create a graphic novel (drawn, collaged, etc.)
- produce a short film
- write a short story
- draft a play

Use what you have learned from Chris Ware's project, in particular, thinking about intersecting characters and plotlines. This should not be told straightforwardly, rather you should have an intersection of different people and events. Think not about a person's perspective, but a BUILDING'S.

You must submit a project proposal. This will include all the notes and documentation that you produced on your building, including at least two photographs. Additionally, you should type up at least one paragraph explaining your idea for your project. Be as specific as possible. You should also include an outline, sketching out the basic plot. Explain HOW you are going to make your project (hand draw? Film shoot at location? Etc.), including how long you expect it to be. This proposal is CRUCIAL because it allows both the professor and student to be on the same page, and assures that you project meets appropriate expectations.

DEADLINES:

9/22 – Book Review

10/8 – Building Notes and Project Proposal

10/15 – Proposal Revisions if needed

10/27 – Project Due

Grade Breakdown:

Book Review: 30% (10% writing/formatting, 15% content, 5% thesis statement)

Project: 70% (10% appropriate content, 15% proposal, 20% creativity, 25% final project completion, achieving proposal goals, and addressing the assignment)

FORMATTING

All written assignments must be typed using the following guidelines: 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1" margins, double-spaced, with page numbers. *Artwork and book titles must be italicized.* Failure to format properly will result in a lower grade.