

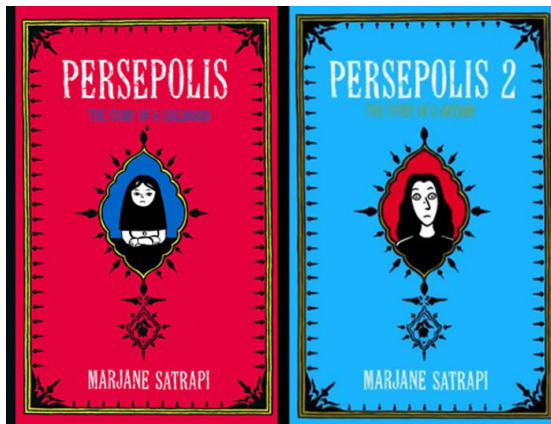
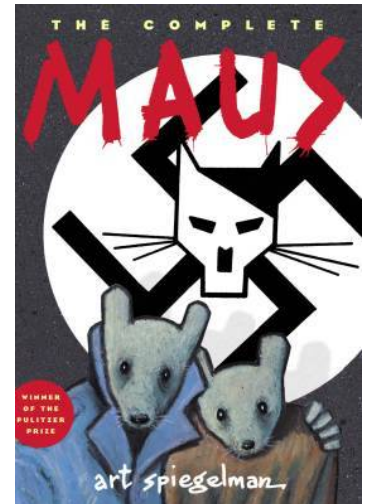
# Summer 2016 Reading List from the History Department

This year, we've compiled a list that focuses on graphic novels<sup>1</sup>  
with historical themes.



Image source: <https://chasemagnett.wordpress.com/2013/03/19/comics-vs-graphic-novels-semantic-showdown/>

**Art Spiegelman's *Maus*** → is one of the classics. First published in serial format between 1980 and 1991, it's now available in a single volume. The book tells of Spiegelman's father's experiences as a Jew during the Holocaust. Jews are drawn as mice, while Poles and Nazis are depicted as cats. At the same time, it reflects on the process of telling a story and on Spiegelman's relationship with his father. It's gripping in a rather chilling kind of way.

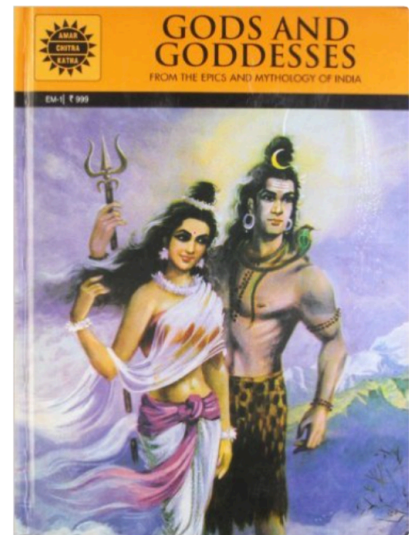
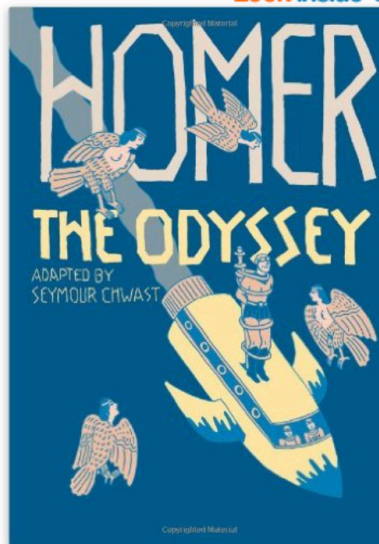


The ← ***Persepolis*** books (issues I-IV) by **Marjane Satrapi** tell the story of one young woman's experience of changing life in Iran before and after the Revolution of 1978-9. The first 2 issues (volume 1) tell of her life from ages 6-14 against the backdrop of the Islamic Revolution, ending with her family's departure from Iran. Volume 2 tells the story of her return to Iran in the 1980s.

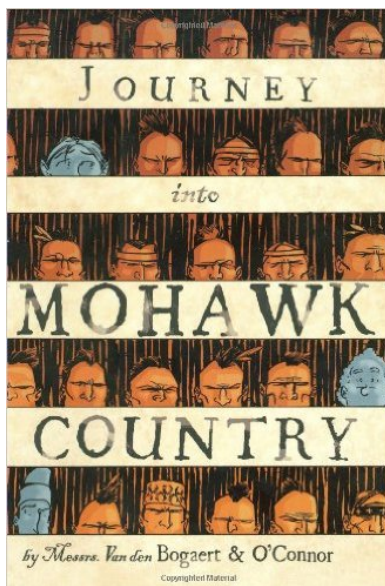
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<sup>1</sup> We're assured that graphic novels are not the same as comics, though a quick google search suggests that the jury is still out on this point.

Graphic novels can be a good way to visit or revisit some of the classic works of literature, as long as you appreciate that they're not the real thing. **Gareth Hinds**↓ and **Seymour Chwast**↓ have both retold the story of **Homer's *Odyssey***, for instance. Hinds sticks fairly closely to the plot, while Chwast updates the tale for a 21<sup>st</sup>-century audience (the story begins with Odysseus and Calypso reclining on beach loungers – this is certainly not one for the purists). Chwast has given similar treatment to **Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*** (in which the Wife of Bath rides a motorcycle) and **Dante's *Inferno***. The Amar Chitra Katha series ↓ consists of hundreds of stories from Hindu mythology and history.



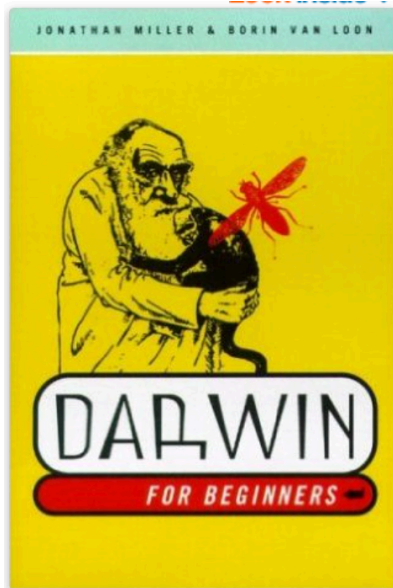
If you type “Campfire graphic novels” into Amazon, you’ll get hundreds of hits on everything from World War One to Gandhi to the Wright Brothers. They range a bit in quality. Dr. Bardsley was not wildly impressed with ***Gandhi: My Life is My Message***, nor ***Conquering Everest: The Lives of Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay***, but her daughter thought both were OK.



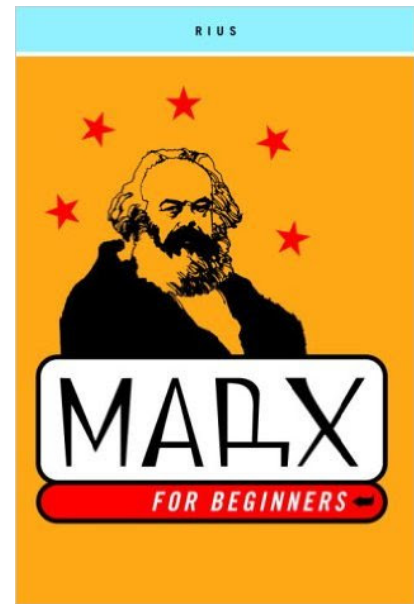
← ***Journey into Mohawk Country*** is the 1635-1635 journal of **Harmen Meynderts van den Bogaert**, a Dutch barber-surgeon who traveled into Mohawk and Oneida (two members of the Iroquois Confederacy) country in the winter of 1634-1635. His account is important it provides the earliest description we have of Iroquois villages and provides insights into the early affects of trade and disease on an Aboriginal population.



As the *New York Times* says, ***Marx for Beginners*** → by **Rius** is "a superb little book in a most improbable format....I recommend it unreservedly for anyone who wants the rudiments of Marx from an engaging mentor....Rius on Marx is magnificent. He shows that pictures can amplify ideas, and that simplicity need not forgo subtlety."

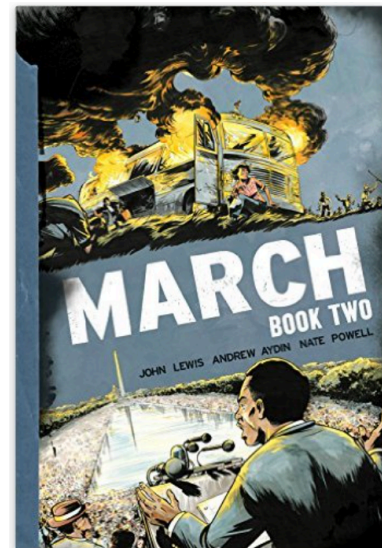
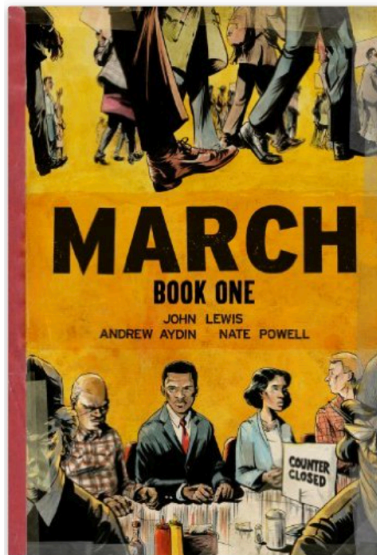


← Dean Skalnik recommends ***Darwin for Beginners*** by **Jonathan Miller and Borin van Loon** in the same series.



→ **John Robert Lewis, Andrew Aydin and Nate Powell, *March: Books One and Two***

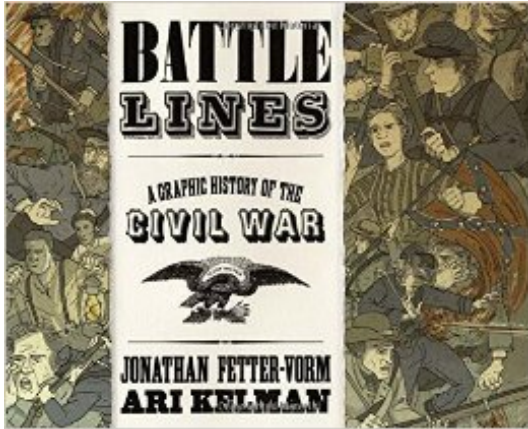
Congress member John Lewis, who received an honorary doctoral degree from Moravian College in 2014, recounts his life story in two graphic memoirs. Lewis is a civil rights activist who grew up in the segregated South. Book 3 will be released on August 2, 2016.



**Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. →**

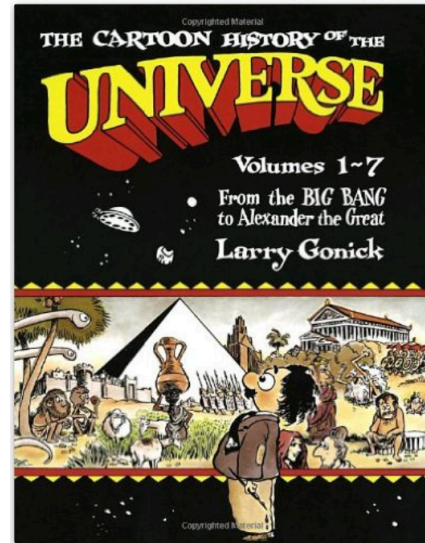
This graphic autobiography is by Alison Bechdel, creator of the acclaimed cartoon series "Dykes to Watch Out For." In it, Bechdel describes growing up with a closeted gay father.





← *Battle Lines* views the American Civil War from a variety of perspectives and carries the story into Reconstruction. **Ari Kelman** draws the reader into themes and issues of the American Civil War through a variety of mostly everyday objects.

Larry Gonick's *Cartoon History of the Universe*, *Cartoon History of the Modern World*, and *Cartoon History of the United States* series are fun. Dean Skalnik especially recommends *The Cartoon History of the Universe, 1: From the Big Bang to Alexander the Great*. →



For anyone interested in historical novels generally (of the non-graphic variety), our winter 2015-16 reading list can be found here:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B-2mp08k349Wa1RjZlZoeTUxWmM>

In addition to these, Provost Kosso recommends *The Dovekeepers*, by **Alice Hoffman**, a moving novel about the tragedy at Masada. She also notes that a still-readable classic is **E.M. Forster's** *A Passage to India* (1924), a tale using the backdrop of the British Raj and the Indian independence movement.

For those interested in traditionally-formatted histories, Dr. Lempa recommends: **Ann Goldberg. *Honor, Politics, and the Law in Imperial Germany, 1871-1914***. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, and **Sander Gilman. *Making the Body Beautiful. A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery***. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. Dr. Keshodkar recommends *Orientalism* by **Edward Said** and *The Wretched of the Earth* by **Franz Fanon** and reports that both books offer a critique of evolution of western modernity and its institutions that continue to misrepresent and suppress the histories and lived experiences of peoples from outside the North Atlantic world.