

# Exploring Mental Health through Comics (Un)Common Reads IDH2930 Section 2504 Fall 2025 Syllabus University of Florida Honors Program

## CLASS MEETINGS:

Tuesdays, 8<sup>th</sup> period, 3:00-3:50pm  
C2-41A (Communicore)

## COURSE WEBSITE:

E-Learning (Canvas) website:  
<https://elearning.ufl.edu/>

## INSTRUCTORS:

Ariel Pomputius  
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(352) 273-8406

*We are happy to meet with you virtually by appointment.*

## COMMUNITY STATEMENT:

We intend this course to be helpful and engaging for students of all backgrounds and perspectives and that your learning needs are served in and out of class. It is our intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of age, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, nationality, race, religion, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated and can be submitted anonymously at any time through this survey: [https://ufl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9LfUVKbJLBTeBX8](https://ufl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9LfUVKbJLBTeBX8)

It is our goal to make all class materials and assignments accessible to everyone, using the principles of universal design for learning. In addition, if you require specific academic accommodations, please avail yourself of the resources of the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>, 352-392-8565) and discuss this with us as soon as possible in the semester.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS:

This course is designed to examine various aspects of mental health through the lens of graphic medicine, which is the intersection of comics and health care. Class readings will be structured around an illustrated guide to mental health, including the neuroanatomy of the brain as well as the psychological factors of mental health such as emotions and stigma. Supplementary readings selected from key graphic medicine texts with complementary subject coverage will bring nuance to the discussions.

Students who participate in this course will:

- Explore essential concepts of the brain and mental health in an accessible sequential art format
- Discuss informational explanations of mental health concepts juxtaposed with personal narratives
- Examine the use of visuals and text to promote health literacy and improve engagement with health information
- Develop visual literacy through the examination of comics and sequential art created by different authors

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- Review health disparities experienced in the way mental health is diagnosed and treated within the healthcare system

### CONTENT WARNING STATEMENT:

This course will examine various aspects of mental health, including sensitive topics such as trauma, addiction, and suicide. Additional sensitive topics may arise in class discussions, and it's possible that some of these discussions may cause discomfort. While students may share personal anecdotes during class discussions and are expected to respect that personal anecdotes shared in class are to stay in the classroom ("lessons leave, stories stay"), please be mindful that the instructors are not psychologists and this class is not a therapy session; discussion threads should be connected back to the week's readings and the course objectives.

UF offers resources to support student mental health and wellbeing, including:

- U Matter, We Care: <https://umatter.ufl.edu/>
  - If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.
- Counseling and Wellness Center (CWC): <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575
- Crisis & Emergency Resource Center (CERC): <https://counseling.ufl.edu/services/crisis/>
  - If you are in crisis, call CERC to consult with an on-call counselor who can assess your needs and connect you with the most appropriate resources. You can call 24/7 at 352-392-1575.
  - CERC Crisis Walk-ins: 401 Peabody Hall, Monday through Friday, from 9am-4pm.

### REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

*Here I Am, I Am Me: An Illustrated Guide to Mental Health*

By Cara Bean

### CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS\*:

Date	Topic	Readings/Activities	Assignments
August 26	Introductions	Review syllabus	
September 2	Graphic Medicine	Graphic Manifesto: Introduction (pp 1-20) Here I Am: Introduction (1-6)	Contemplation on readings
September 9	Addressing stigma	Here I Am: Chapter 1: Stigma (7-14) Psychiatric Tales: It Could Be You (23-27) Psychiatric Tales: People With Mental Illness Enrich Our Lives (53-65) Psychiatric Tales: Schizophrenia (91-102) <a href="#">The Myth of the Strong Black Woman</a> by Whit Taylor	Contemplation on readings
September 16	Physiology	Here I Am: Chapter 2: The Brain (15-34) Neurocomic (35-55)	Contemplation on readings
September 23	Psychology	Here I Am: Chapter 3: The Mind (35-67) Sensory: Tips for Autistic Adult Life by T. Catt (93-98) Sensory: Autistic Joy by Taylor Reynolds (119-126)	Contemplation on readings

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		Sensory: Getting Autism Diagnosed by T. Catt and Allie (130-134) Sensory: Self-Diagnosis by Bex Ollerton (135-137)	
September 30	Stress and Anxiety**	Here I Am: Chapter 4: Fear (68-105) Anxiety is Really Strange: 1-12	Contemplation on readings
October 7	Making Zines	Here I Am: Chapter 5: Coping (106-144) Everything is OK: 164-183	Contemplation on readings
October 14	Art and Wellbeing	Field Trip (Harn Museum) Museum Introduction <a href="#">ARTS ON PRESCRIPTION: A Field Guide for US Communities (12-27)</a>	Zines due to instructors
October 21	Addiction** & Class Zine Fair	Here I Am: Chapter 6: Substance Use & Addiction (145-183) Sobriety: 116-133	Contemplation on readings
October 28	Depression**	Here I Am: Chapter 7: Depression (184-212) Hyperbole: Depression Part 2 (121-156)	Contemplation on readings  Project Proposal Due
November 4	Crisis Prevention**	Here I Am: Chapter 8: Suicide & Crisis Prevention (213-234) <a href="#">I Want to Live</a> <a href="#">Oogachaga Suicide Prevention Campaign</a> Crisis Prevention Plan Zine (provided in class)	Contemplation on readings
November 11	Veterans Day Holiday—No Class		
November 18	Next Steps	Here I Am: Chapter 9: Getting Help (235-262) Couch Fiction: (8-38)	Contemplation on readings
November 25	Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class		
December 2		Final Presentations (Lightning Talks)	Final Projects Due

\* Please come prepared having read the assigned chapters listed for each class day.

\*\*Given the sensitive nature of these topics, we want to remind you that UF provides resources to support your mental health and wellbeing:

- U Matter, We Care: <https://umatter.ufl.edu/>
  - If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.
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#### FLEXIBILITY CLAUSE:

We reserve the right to modify the class schedule listed above as needed. Any changes will be made well in advance, and you will be immediately notified. Conflicts that arise due to a change in schedule can be discussed with us and will not be held against you. Scheduled Reading Assignments and Graded Assignments should not change, except due to unforeseen circumstances.

#### GRADED ASSIGNMENTS:

##### Attendance/Participation

Students will be evaluated on participation in classroom discussions, each worth 20 points. Students should come prepared to create dialogue with classmates by posing thoughtful questions, making connections within the texts, and engaging with other participants.

##### Written Contemplations

Before every class, students will submit a reflection on the reading, which can be as simple as 100-word stream of conscious writing, a drawing or visual representation of their thoughts, or a longer reflection (no more than two pages). Contemplations allow students to not only reflect on the readings but also express and process their thoughts and emotions to prepare for group discussion.

##### Zine on a Mental Health Topic

After learning to create a simple, one-page zine in class (October 7), students will create a zine on a topic chosen from a provided list. Students will sign up for their topic in class (maximum 2 students per topic) and need to determine the audience (providers, patients, specific age groups, etc.), what aspect of the topic they would like to cover (general overview, health disparities, coping strategies, etc.), and how best to express themselves in eight pages.

##### Final Project

The final project should integrate insights learned from the course. Students will create their own visual, written, oral, or audiovisual representation of a topic inspired by classroom discussions. A proposal describing your project will be due halfway through the semester (October 28). On the last day of class (December 2) students will present a 3-minute lightning talk on their project, highlighting the key points.

Assignment	Total Points	Percent of Grade
Attendance/Participation (12)	240	40%
Contemplations (10)	120	20%
Zine on Mental Health Topic	90	15%
Project Proposal	30	5%
Final Project	120	20%
TOTAL	600	100%

#### Grade scale for class points awarded:

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89

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B 83-86  
B- 80-82

More information on grades and grading policies is available here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

A minimum grade of B is required to earn Academic points towards your Honors Completion Requirements. (Exception: Honors Quest I and II sections require a C). Once you have earned your final grade in this course, please upload the course information and final grade from your Unofficial Transcript into your Honors Canvas Cohort: Honors Completion module to earn Honors Completion credit.

### CLASS ATTENDANCE & MAKE-UP POLICY:

Requirements for class attendance, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Attendance at and participation in class sessions is mandatory and is worth 40% of the total course grade.

We understand that valid absences may occur. If you have a valid documented excuse and notify us by email in advance, you will be able to make up missed class discussions through written means.

### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and to remain in class until the class has been dismissed. Students are expected to come to class prepared, having completed any required readings and performed any preparatory work that is assigned. While in class, students are expected to participate in class discussions and to treat the other students and the instructors with respect and attention. While in class, students should not participate in texting, information seeking or viewing outside of that related to the course task at hand, talking on the phone, or other activities not related to classroom engagement and participation. Students are responsible for understanding all course policies and for accessing all course materials on the UF E-Learning Website through the URL listed above. All assignments should be submitted through the website and in hard copy when requested. Students are also responsible for checking their UF e-mail account for course notifications and for communicating with the instructors related to any situation that may hinder his or her progress or participation in the course.

### ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS:

Please provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing the online evaluation at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but you will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to you at any time at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

### ACADEMIC HONESTY:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code". On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this

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assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructors in this class.

## STUDENT USE OF AI:

**When authorized by the course director**, students may use AI technologies in the completion of coursework as long as they cite all such use by naming the technology and how it was employed. **For any questions about potential use, please speak to the course directors before completing the assignment.** Students assume full responsibility for all content, including errors and omissions. Assistive technology authorized as part of an accommodation for a disability is always permitted.

Course instructors may adjust limitations on AI assistive technology use and must communicate any limitations to students sufficiently in advance of the assignment due date. Failure to cite the use of AI assistive technology, or use of the technology disregarding specific course limitations is considered academic misconduct. The use of AI on assignments, essays/reflection papers, exams, and quizzes when prohibited by course or college instructions is considered cheating and students are violating the UF Regulations 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

It is important to note that many generative AI models (e.g. ChatGPT, ChatSonic, Google Bard etc) place any information that they are provided with into the public domain. When using such tools, you must therefore ensure that they are never provided with confidential information. UF AI systems (e.g., Co-Pilot, NaviGator) should never be provided with confidential information. For the avoidance of doubt, the use of such tools is prohibited for generating any confidential communications, including, but not limited to, communications relating to patient records, clients, students and intellectual property. You are also reminded that you should always review the terms and conditions of any third-party software you use (e.g. proof-reading tools) to ensure that any data they are provided with is appropriately protected. Always verify information and sources generated by AI tools. AI has been known to generate false information and to cite non-existent sources. Also, because AI-generated text mines people’s intellectual property without appropriate credit, this raises ethical concerns.

Students are responsible for understanding their dynamic data stewardship responsibilities to minimize personal, college, and university risk. UF Integrated Risk Management – CHATGPT Privacy, Factual Accuracy and Usage Guidelines

## RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL HELP:

### Honors Program

- To contact the Honors Program: *Honors Program, 201 Walker Hall, 352-392-1519*
- Quick questions for an Honors advisor? *Email [advisor@honors.ufl.edu](mailto:advisor@honors.ufl.edu)*
- Need an Honors advising appointment? Schedule via Microsoft Bookings: <https://bit.ly/ufhonorsadvising>

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## **Health and Wellness**

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- Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575
- UF Title IX: [inform@titleix.ufl.edu](mailto:inform@titleix.ufl.edu), 352-273-1094
- University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

## **Academic Resources**

- Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>
- Student Complaints On-Campus: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

## **UF Student Success**

For improving study skills to connecting with a peer tutor, peer mentor, success coach, academic advisor, and wellness resources, go to <http://studentsuccess.ufl.edu>