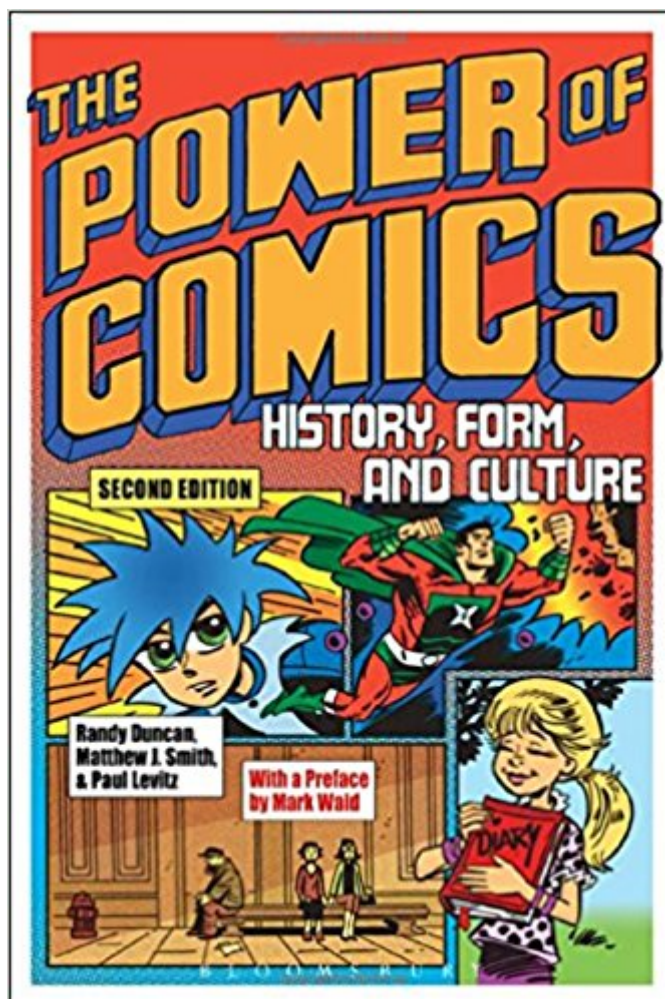


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# The Power Of Comics: History, Form, And Culture



## Synopsis

Fully revised and updated for its second edition, *The Power of Comics* remains the most authoritative introduction to comic books and graphic novels – the history of the medium, its many forms and manifestations and their place in contemporary culture. The new edition includes: An expanded historical section bringing the story of comic books up to the present and covering the rise of the graphic novel and the advent of digital comics A new chapter on the memoir genre and a thoroughly revised chapter on the superhero genre A revised chapter – “Exploring Meanings in Comic Book Texts” – introduces students to the theoretical tools they need to read comics critically Study objectives, discussion points, activities and annotated further reading guides in each chapter, helping students master the topics covered Illustrated throughout, with an extensive glossary of key terms, *The Power of Comics* also includes further updated resources available online at [www.powerofcomics.com](http://www.powerofcomics.com), including additional essays, weblinks and sample syllabi.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“If teaching a class on comic books or even teaching a specific graphic novel in your class, this is an excellent book to facilitate your teaching.”  
• Michael Niederhausen, *The Journal of Popular Culture*  
“At a time when there are an expanding number of college classes focused on comics and graphic storytelling, *The Power of Comics*, newly updated and enhanced, remains a core textbook, one which deals with comics as an industrial product, as an

aesthetic form, as a system of genres, and as a cultural phenomenon, one which is equally encompassing in terms of the range of different kinds of comics discussed, equally at home dealing with superhero sagas, underground comics, and manga (not to mention examples from across comic's history and around the world.) This is one of the rare textbooks which also makes original scholarly contributions, providing rich insider insights into how comics publishing works, and refining our vocabulary for visual and narrative analysis.

— Henry Jenkins, author of 'The Wow Climax: Tracing the Emotional Impact of Popular Culture'

— Randy Duncan, Matthew Smith, and Paul Levitz have delivered an outstanding and much-needed volume that should be required reading in any of the growing number of comics studies classes in academia today. The Power of Comics provides historical, cultural, and literary approaches that will not only deepen students' understanding of this medium but help them develop the critical tools required to engage meaningfully with a host of other subjects and issues. Highly recommended.

— Rocco Versaci, author of This Book Contains Graphic Language: Comics as Literature

— "Other studies have offered chapters which focus on readers and audiences amongst a range of other themes. A notable example is Randy Duncan and Matthew J. Smith (2009) The Power of Comics: History, Form & Culture which is an excellent teaching resource.

— Robert G. Weiner and Mel Gibson, Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics

— "The Power of Comics provides a solid introduction to comics with a distinct educational perspective that will hopefully become a standard text for students to expand their awareness of comics in our culture.

— David A. Beron, The International Journal of Comic Art

— "The Power of Comics represents a major step forward in popular-culture scholarship . . . it's a splendid, wonderfully structured, intelligently argued, absolutely essential work.

— Bill Jones, author of Classics Illustrated: A Cultural History

— "As a textbook, it succeeds in content, scope, and execution. The chapters are well laid out, have thoughtful questions at their ends, and several chapters end with very practical examples of analysis that serve as models for students. Chapters also reference a broad range of experts . . . which further validates breadth and depth of this growing scholarship. . . . Overall . . . the book-including the theory chapters-is reasonably good for a 'first textbook on comics,' and I would imagine it will fast become a standard text for those sorts of classes

— Neil Cohn, author of 'The Visual Language of Comics'

— "Their chapter topics, overall approach, and extensive use of scholarship and academic jargon broken down into layman's terms really do allow for neophyte and fanboy alike to fully understand the 'power of comics.' Indeed, instructors looking to venture into the world of comics or think about pedagogical approaches to using comics in any

type of classroom would do well to make personal use of this book. Lance Eaton, NEPCA Journal "The influences of mass-communication scholarship are evident in this textbook's organization, featured topics, and student-oriented discussion questions and activities... It covers definitions, history, industry, creators, development of stories, readers, genres, ideology, research, and international comics... The authors go out of their way to make the book student friendly: they state the objects of each chapter, highlight significant terminology, list important points, and provide vignettes of incidental information... [T]his book works serves well as the first full-scale text on US comic books and will also be useful in a library setting. Summing up: Recommended. Lower- and upper-division undergraduates, graduate students. Choice

Now in a substantially revised and updated new edition, this is the most authoritative available introduction to the history, forms and impact of comic books.

The 464 pages of the book includes quite a bit of introductory material and over 50 pages of glossary, bibliography and index (the latter being quite invaluable, naturally), so there's not quite as much "meat" in the book as you might imagine. And while the size of the book is clearly stated on the order page, I must say it is a little underwhelming when you hold the book in your hands. Essentially, the diminutive 6x9 inch format and 100% black-and-white content leaves little opportunity to truly demonstrate THE POWER of comics, as there are very few examples of truly powerful work. For \$75 and up, I expected a little more production value and visual dynamics. The snippets of professional reviews on the book's main page summarize the significant attributes of the "The Power of Comics," so there's no need for me to drone on about them. The content does provide a basic primer on comic books and it's quite thorough, and while clearly focused on American comics it does have a decent chapter at the end of the book on international comics. In my opinion, the book gives short shrift to the impact of underground comix and barely acknowledges the brilliance and influence of Robert Crumb, but that's a pet peeve of mine that may not be shared by conventional comic-book fans and historians. Overall, I'm glad I purchased the book (thank goodness for the gift card from a co-worker that helped on the cost) and it will prove to be the type of authoritative work I reference in the future (hence the 4 star review). But I do wish it had provided more aesthetic punch to the impressive analyses.

Highly Recommended !!

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