



# The Power of Comics: History, Form and Culture

*Randy Duncan, Matthew J. Smith*

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A comprehensive introduction to the comic arts

From the introduction by Paul Levitz

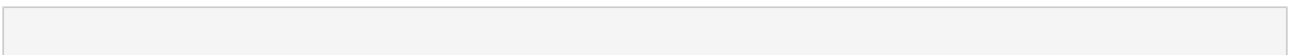
"If ever there was a medium characterized by its unexamined self-expression, it's comics. For decades after the medium's birth, it was free of organized critical analysis, its creators generally disinclined to self-analysis or formal documentation. The average reader didn't know who created the comics, how or why . . . and except for a uniquely destructive period during America's witch-hunting of the 1950s, didn't seem to care. As the medium has matured, however, and the creativity of comics began to touch the mainstream of popular culture in many ways, curiosity followed, leading to journalism and eventually, scholarship, and so here we are."

*The Power of Comics* is the first introductory textbook for comic art studies courses. Lending a broader understanding of the medium and its communication potential, it provides students with a coherent and comprehensive explanation of comic books and graphic novels, including coverage of their history and their communication techniques, research into their meanings and effects and an overview of industry practices and fan culture.

Co-authors Randy Duncan and Matthew J. Smith draw on their own years of experience teaching comics studies courses and the scholarly literature across several disciplines to create a text with the following features:

- Discussion questions for each chapter
- Activities to engage readers
- Recommended reading suggestions
- Over 150 illustrations
- Bibliography
- Glossary

*The Power of Comics* deals exclusively with comic books and graphic novels. One reason for this focus is that no one text can hope to do justice to both strips and books; there is simply too much to cover. Preference is given to comic books because in their longer form, the graphic novel, they have the greatest potential for depth and complexity of expression. As comic strips shrink in size and become more inane in content, comic books are becoming a serious art form.



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