Schedule:
- March 15—Assignment Given / Essay Lecture
- March 20—Computer Lab 201 Outlining Day (Outline due at the end of class)
- March 22—Computer Lab 201 Drafting Day (You will need to show me what you have done to get credit this day)
- April 3—Instructor Workshop (Sign up in class for your time—we will not have regular class that day; instead, you will meet me in my office and bring your draft for review)
- April 5—Essay Due

Points:
- Outline 10 Points
- Draft Day 10 Points
- Instructor Workshop 20 Points
- Essay 100 Points

Length:
- 2-3 Pages

Instructions:
As we have been discussing, Maus is a complex and rich text that provides ample opportunity for analysis. In this essay, you will be asked to critically look at Maus. You must choose from the topic list below, but you must write a well-organized essay that has a logical progression of ideas throughout. You should have a clear thesis in your introduction that details the conclusion you have come to about the work, as well as have three supporting body paragraphs to prove your thesis. Lastly, you should have a concluding paragraph that restates your thesis and sums up your views. Here are the topics:

1) There are rich characters within Maus, Part I. Choosing one of the characters, explore the complexity of their portrayal. In other words, do a character study. You can look at their motivations, their characteristics, their personalities, etc., but you will want to back up your claims about the character by using selections from the novel as evidence. For instance, Anja becomes an enigmatic figure because of Art’s and Vladek’s portrayal of her throughout the book. If I was writing this essay, I would choose to focus on Vladek and Anja’s meeting, Anja’s communist connections, and Art’s remembrance of her through the “Prisoner on the Hell Planet” comic within Maus. I would show how they create a mysterious image of her through their depictions in these parts.

2) Choosing a panel (or connected panels) from the novel, break down the meaning of the image. For instance, when reading “Prisoner on Hell Planet,” the audience receives Art’s anger over his mother’s suicide through his depiction of the situation. In the body, I could talk about how the art style is no longer soft; it is jagged, angular, and jarring—provoking
emotion from the audience. I could talk about the language used in the speech bubbles, and I could talk about how the coloring becomes darker. These parts work together to show Art’s anguish over the situation.

3) We have talked about the idea of trauma leaking out of the pages of *Maus*. Using two to three examples, discuss where trauma is presented in *Maus*. In your discussion, think about how that trauma is drawn or depicted and how it takes shape. For instance, and this is just one example, the first two pages, the prologue of the novel, feature an instance of trauma when Vladek addresses Art and says “If you lock them together in a room with no food for a week…. then you could see what it is, Friends!” It is subtle and nonchalantly said, but ultimately, we are reminded that Vladek went through life in a concentration camp and that Art’s trifle with his friends is small in the large scheme of life.

**Things to Remember:**

- Make sure to give your essay a title that gives it an identity and that entices your reader to read further.
- Make sure you are aware of your audience. Use formal writing; no “I”. Stay away from contractions, clichés, and obvious or overstated sentences.
- Make sure that your essay has a central idea. This essay should have a clear and argumentative thesis within the introduction.
- Make sure that your essay is clearly organized and has transitions that enhance implicit connections among paragraphs, sentences, and ideas.
- Make sure that your essay has an introduction and conclusion.
- Stay in present tense, or the literary tense when writing about the graphic novel.
- If you quote or paraphrase from any source, remember that you have to cite this information within the essay (in-text or parenthetical citations) and outside of the essay (Works Cited Page). You will need to come see me if you choose to do this. Ultimately, I want to see your interpretation over others’.