

# ENGL 414: UNIT 2 ASSIGNMENT

## INVENTED SUPERHERO PORTFOLIO



USPS 2014 issue of Batman commemorative stamps

In this assignment, you will demonstrate your grasp of the evolution of comics within the broader context of US social history by creating an original superhero figure and then assembling a “portfolio” that chronicles several major stages of her/his development from the Golden Age up to the present. Your portfolio must include the following three components, which can either be presented separately or merged into a single presentation (see note on “format” below):

### 1. HISTORICAL PROFILES

Your portfolio must include at least three “profiles” of your figure at the major stages of his or her career—Golden Age, Silver Age, and Contemporary. The format is flexible, but be sure to specify your invented superhero’s powers, ties to a particular locality, background, personality traits, etc. (also think about supplying a secret identity and an archenemy or two). Your Golden Age profile should probably include an explicit origin story; you might also want to consider a later reboot and/or transplantation to an alternative setting. Feel free to sketch major story arcs and mention memorable team-ups.

### 2. ILLUSTRATION

Comics can’t exist without the visual, and your portfolio should also contain at least one illustration of your superhero creation. Those of you with artistic talent are welcome to produce original drawings; however, you will receive just as much credit if you use a superhero image generator, such as the following:

- [http://marvel.com/games/play/31/create\\_your\\_own\\_superhero](http://marvel.com/games/play/31/create_your_own_superhero)
- <http://www.heromachine.com/heromachine-2-5-character-portrait-creator/>
- <http://www.heromachine.com/heromachine-3-lab/> (This is a more advanced version.)

Be sure to pick a pose, costume, etc. that fits your superhero’s profile!

### 3. RATIONALE/DISCUSSION OF WIDER CONTEXT

In your portfolio, you must explicitly discuss how the evolution of your superhero typifies trends in superhero literature and the comics industry, tying these to wider social and political changes. Do be creative in developing your superhero, but please don’t stint on this component! (See note on length below.)

## NOTE ON FORMAT:

Flexibility is the watchword for this assignment. As long as you include the required components, you are free to get as creative as you like with the presentation. You could, for example, merge all three components by creating a single “entry” for your figure in a superhero encyclopedia, or by composing a short critical “study” of your figure that would serve as the introduction for retrospective collection, or even by writing up a newspaper or magazine “interview” with one or more of its seminal writers. Alternatively, you could produce a set of “trading cards” that merged profiles and illustrations, and then include a separate analysis essay where you discuss your choices and how they fit with wider social and political changes. The possibilities are endless!

## NOTE ON LENGTH:

No matter how you choose to format the components of your portfolio, it should include a minimum of 750 words of written text.

## GRADING RUBRIC:

Your portfolio will be graded according to the following criteria:

### 50% OVERALL CONTENT

- Does your portfolio have sufficient depth and does it meet the minimum length requirement?
- Does it include all of the necessary components?
- How well does your invented superhero and his or her later incarnations succeed in capturing trends in comic book literature and tracing their relationship to wider social history, and how persuasively have you conveyed this?

### 30% WRITTEN EXPRESSION

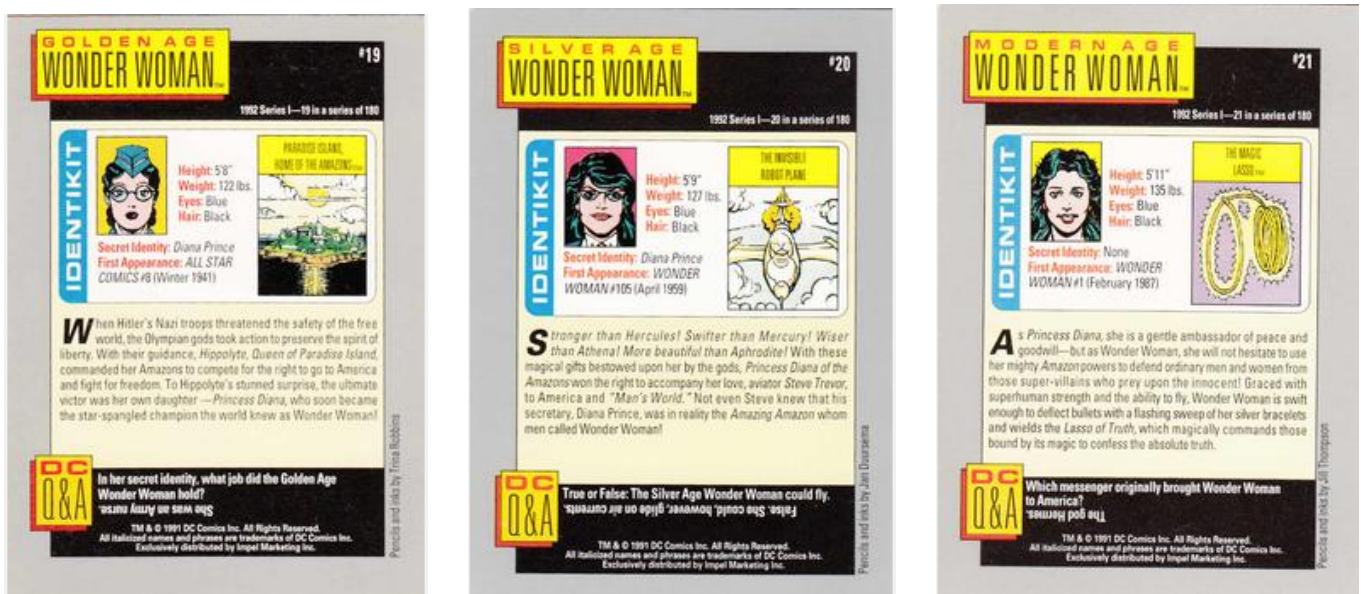
- Includes organization, flow, style (clarity and liveliness), and conventions: the usual drill!

### 20% PRESENTATION

- Is the way you’ve displayed and presented your information rhetorically effective?
- Have you stuck to the basics, or does your presentation show thoughtfulness, flair, and creativity?

**DUE DATE:** Thursday, Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>

- I require both a hard copy submitted AT THE BEGINNING of class (for me to comment on) and an electronic copy submitted on Blackboard by 5pm. (The hard copy may be in black and white.)



Reverse sides of a set of Wonder Woman DC “Hero Heritage” trading cards issued in the early 90’s