



# *Holy Quarantine, Batman!* Teaching Reflections on BLM, the Global Pandemic, and the World's Greatest Detective

*Garret L. Castleberry*

**Abstract.** An introduction to comics studies class evolved into a platform for identifying genre conventions in urban crime superhero fiction in the context of both the pandemic and social anxieties relating to the BLM movement. The author examines how the initial crime fiction emphasis on Batman grew into a dialogic reflection concerning BLM and other crime-adjacent social topics in the initial months of the coronavirus global pandemic.

In the fall 2017 semester, a quaint nonprofit private college situated at the crossroads of Middle America and the American Southwest rebranded its Communication and Public Relations degree to fit wider ambitions rooted in twenty-first century potentialities. Under the degree banner Communication, Media, and Ethics, the renovated program sought to include a wider range of interdisciplinary tiers of academic emphasis and professional development. Special Topics in Media Studies launched in fall 2018 as one of the spotlight fourth-year seminars, with the subtitle *Mythic Media in America*. This essay will focus on (1) a description of the Special Topics: *Mythic Media in America* curriculum design, (2) an account of the course running at the onset of the coronavirus global pandemic and (3) a collision with the cultural discourses and media coverage converging around the Black Lives Matter social and political movement in the United States specifically.

Special Topics in Media Studies is designed to include endless interpretative potential based upon the pedagogical preferences and specialized training collaboratively negotiated

*Garret L. Castleberry* is an associate professor at Mid-America Christian University in Oklahoma City and serves as chair of the university's Adult School of Arts and Sciences and program director of Communication, Media, and Ethics for the College of Adult and Graduate Studies. His scholarly research intersects areas of media studies, genre, and semiotics, and he coedited *Competition, Community, and Educational Growth: Contemporary Perspectives on Competitive Speech and Debate*.