Creating Comics
Introduction

In *Unflattening*, Nick Sousanis describes comics not only as sequential art, a means of combining words and images, but also as a means of restructuring thought and "unflattening" or adding dimension to our perception. The genre invites us to "reconsider how we order experience and give shape to our thoughts." In comics, he suggests, "form and expression become one." They convey meaning "not only by what's depicted, but through structure: the size, shape placement, and relationship of components." He cites Art Spiegelman, who sees the page as an "architectonic unit, ideas made spatial" and Chris Ware, who calls comics "a space to reconstitute memory." Sousanis writes: "From the forking paths, tangential (and parenthetical), unbound, layered and overlapping, intersecting, comics can hold the unflat ways in which thought unfolds. Through its multiplicity of approaches for constituting experience, this form can provide an elevated perspective from which to illuminate the traps of our own making." In this sense, comic become a means to capture and convey our thoughts in all their tangled complexity" (66-67).

Sousanis' notion of comics as a way of representing the complex "architecture" of thought and experience is ideally suited to methods of inquiry in the liberal arts, which likewise attempt to see questions and ideas in their multidimensional complexity, "unbound, layered and overlapping, intersecting." The application *Comic Life 3* provides teachers and students with an accessible and flexible digital tool for exploring and practicing this unique way of perceiving and representing. With this tool, we can create comics from original and found images, experiment with the architectural structure of our ideas, and juxtapose writing and images in dramatic ways. This module demonstrates that Sousanis' cognitive theory of comics, combined with the practical means of applying them with *Comic Life 3*, opens new methods for approaching complex questions and ideas across disciplines.