ENG 200, Section 002

Foundations of Literary Study
Spring 2027; MWF 1:30–2:20
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Image from Charissa King-O-Brien's *The Paper Mirror* (2012), depicting the writer Alison Bechdel visualizing her artistic and compositional process.

How does literature help us see and feel the world and ourselves? This course introduces students to the study of literature, focusing specifically on how literature can help us grow in our sense of self, each other, and the world. We will begin by immersing ourselves in a nineteenth-century novel to expand our capacity to encounter challenging material and then venture through a graphic novel, a play, a short story sequence, a contemporary novel, and then poetry. While studying these works, we may ask ourselves a series of questions: where we do fit within the picture? What does it mean to feel *seen* by something you've read or experienced? (And, relatedly, what's significant about *not* feeling seen?) We will consider ways to complicate and trouble this form of reading that prioritizes sympathetic identification—do we read *just* to see ourselves or do we read to see something *about* ourselves—to venture into questions about the effects and affects of interpreting literature.

Course books may include the following:

- Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*
- Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*
- Tony Kushner, *Angels in America*
- Nafissa Thompson-Spires, *Heads of the Colored People*