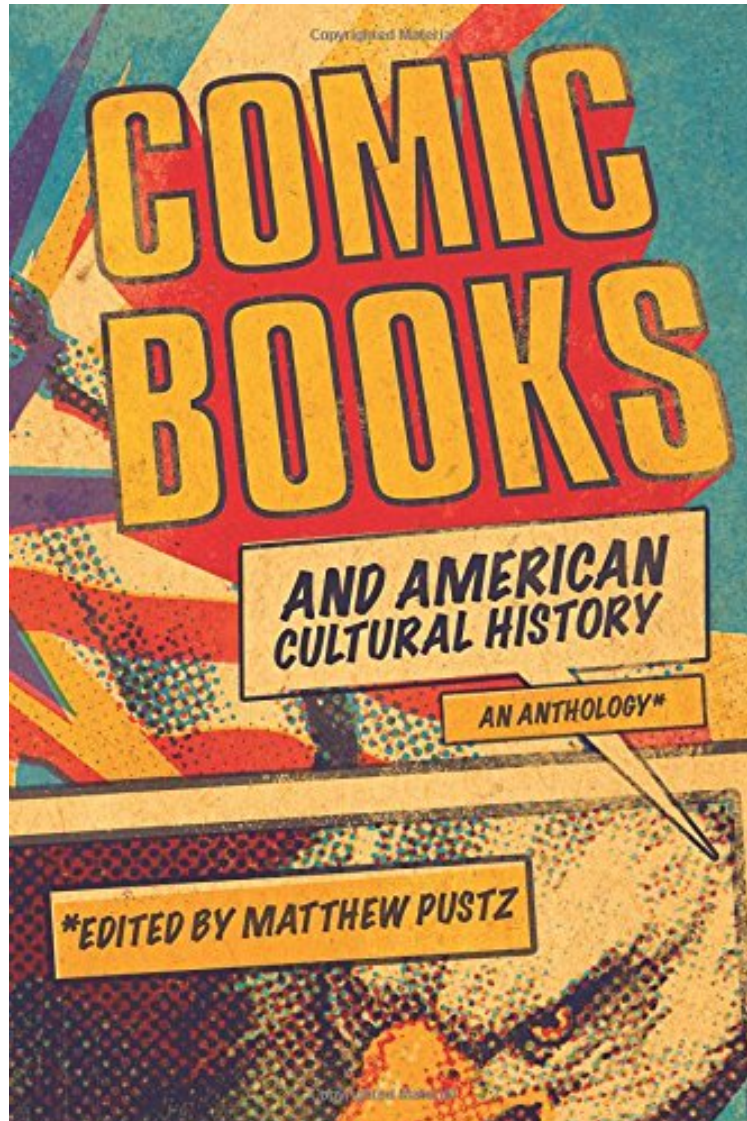


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## Comic Books and American Cultural History: An Anthology

*From Bloomsbury Academic*

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**From Bloomsbury Academic : Comic Books and American Cultural History: An Anthology** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Comic Books and American Cultural History: An Anthology:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Useful but UnevenBy Russ BurgosPart of the growing academic literature on comic books, I enjoyed this edited volume though, like all edited volumes, my enjoyment varied with the topics of each contribution. Since my own interests lie in the intersection of politics and cultural globalization, I was

impressed by Martin Lund's contribution on Superman as a Golem, on John Donovan's reading of the anti-Communist "Fighting American" series, and Peter Lee's chapter on the early-1970s kung fu craze. That being said, at the end of the day this is still an academic, rather than popular, piece of non-fiction, and as a result several of the contributions tend to get bogged down in theoretical discussions that will leave non-academic readers frustrated. In addition, several of the chapters require a fairly high degree of intimacy with specific characters or series in order to take much away from them. Indeed, one of the weaknesses of several chapters, especially Donovan's, is the linearity of the arguments; long digressions on which artist inked whose pencils, for example, don't offer me much value. As an educator, the most valuable contributions in the book were Jessamyn Neuhaus's and Bridget M. Marshall's chapters on using comic books as classroom resources.

Comic Books and American Cultural History is an anthology that examines the ways in which comic books can be used to understand the history of the United States. Over the last twenty years, there has been a proliferation of book-length works focusing on the history of comic books, but few have investigated how comics can be used as sources for doing American cultural history. These original essays illustrate ways in which comic books can be used as resources for scholars and teachers. Part 1 of the book examines comics and graphic novels that demonstrate the techniques of cultural history; the essays in Part 2 use comics and graphic novels as cultural artifacts; the third part of the book studies the concept of historical identity through the 20th century; and the final section focuses on different treatments of contemporary American history. Discussing topics that range from romance comics and Superman to American Flagg! and Ex Machina, this is a vivid collection that will be useful to anyone studying comic books or teaching American history.

About the Author Matthew Pustz is the author of *Comic Book Culture: Fanboys and True Believers*. He has a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Iowa and has taught history, American Studies, and Humanities courses in Iowa and Massachusetts.