

Dreams of Electric Sheep and Cyborgs:

Technology, Imagination, and the Future on Screen

Tues/Thurs 9:30-11am in Solis 101



This CAT 3 course will examine how popular culture--film, television, literature, and music videos-- have and continue to imagine future utopic/dystopic worlds. From *Blade Runner* to *The Hunger Games*, "The ArchAndroid," and *Black Mirror*, we will consider how ideas about race, gender, and technology intersect and construct the imagination of the future. Potential topics we will cover include (but are not limited to), the future of the environment; the future of love; the future of capitalist labor.; and Afrofuturisms The course is framed by the following questions: What can these future worlds tell us about our current or past historical, social, or political moment? How do these visions sooth or exacerbate anxieties about technology? About disaster? About love and family? How are race and gender (re) imagined in the future? This course is driven by research, collaboration, and creativity--using film/literature/television texts to help us question and engage with ideas about the future. The texts we read, watch, and discuss will thus serve as models and inspiration for your own projects.

While there will be some assigned reading, much of what you read for this course, will be articles of your own choosing, which will provide grounding for your original and collaborative final research projects: crafting a television or film pitch and teaser reel, imagining a new, creative, and innovative take on the future.

Contacting me:

- **Office Hours:** T/R 11-12pm in 249 PCH & by appointment
- **E-mail:** pbronstein@ucsd.edu

*The best way to contact me (aside from office hours) is via e-mail. I ask that you expect and allow 48 hours for me to respond. If you do not hear back from me within that window, please email again and politely remind me about your message. Please note that I do not respond to emails Friday evenings-Sunday mornings.

CAT 3 Required Texts & Technology:

- A notebook
- *They Say, I Say*, CAT edition (TSIS)
- Access to the library website, TritonEd, & UCSD Email
- Access to Netflix

Key Course Goals: Writing, Research, and Collaboration

- **Writing & Argumentation:**
 - Develop an ability to write/make, read, understand, and critique arguments and assumptions in texts in diverse genres including multimodal texts (film, television, photography, posters, digital genres, etc.)
 - Effectively organize and support an argument with useful evidence and clear analysis.
 - Consistent and effective use of the revision process: clear progress from draft to draft and assignment to assignment.
- **Research:**
 - Understand and evaluate relevant sources. Cite texts and arguments fairly and effectively. Ability to use sources effectively, drawing key examples and analysis from your research to support your argument, creativity, and art-making.
 - Develop an independent research project: understand key components of research like literature review (and annotated bibliography); proposal process; and revision.
- **Collaboration & Art-Making:**
 - Develop effective ways to collaborate on with a group of your peers.
 - Use digital methods to enhance collaboration.

CAT 3 Key Course Policies

- *For complete CAT policies on attendance, Turnitin, and more please click [here](#).*
- **Attendance:** *in lecture, please sit with your discussion section.* Your TA will take your attendance in lecture (sometimes just by roll but also by collecting discussion questions and quiz responses). Missing more than four class sessions, either lectures or sections, will result in deducting ½ of a letter grade off your final course grade (i.e. an A- would become a B+). Missing 8 or more classes (i.e. 2 weeks of class), is grounds for failing the course. Excessive tardiness will also impact your grade and may be grounds for an absence.
- **Turning in Assignments:** All assignments are due by the day and time marked on the syllabus. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments will be due electronically (via Turnitin or a Google Form).
- **Late work:** We will accept late work for three days after it is due. For each day it is late, we will deduct ⅓ a letter grade. The maximum deducted will be 1 full letter grade. After that (i.e. after 3 days) you receive an F/0. Work more than three days late, will result in a failing grade for the assignment. If you are concerned you will miss a deadline, please contact your TA at least 48 hours before the assignment is due to work out a new deadline. (We will not give extensions retroactively)
- **I ask that you have no electronics in lecture or discussion.** This includes phones, computers, tablets, etc. There is no penalty and we won't police you, however, it helps keep the class focused and engaged for us all to turn off our electronics. If you have a good reason that you need your electronic device, please talk to your TA and me. We are definitely happy to make exceptions! See [here](#), for more on the benefits of no-tech note-taking.
- Lectures for this class will not posted on the course website. However, I will regularly post articles, ideas, and screening questions related to the course and the week's topics.

Peer Review, Self-Evaluation, and Reflection

Self-assessment, reflection, and collaboration are core components of the first year writing program at UCSD. In this class (and CAT broadly), you will do a fair amount of peer review, revision, working in groups, and reflection on your work. That is, be prepared both to receive and offer constructive criticism and re-work your writing, presentations, etc.

- Peer Review will happen regularly, so be prepared to work with your peers and offer constructive critique and receive feedback.
- Revision will be a crucial component of each major assignment. Failure to revise an assignment and/or participate in peer review will lower your final assignment grade by $\frac{1}{3}$ a letter grade.
- Self-Evaluations and Reflections are also a crucial part of this course. I will ask you do reflections on your work throughout the term and a final reflective portfolio. If you fail to do a reflection, it will lower your final assignment grade by $\frac{1}{3}$ a letter grade.
- [Grade Contesting Policy](#) (Must be done before Monday of Week 10)

A Note on Attendance, Participation, and Class Citizenship

This course functions best only through your consistent attendance and participation in both lecture and discussion section. This means you need to consistently show up to class prepared--having done the week's readings and screenings--and ready to engage in open and constructive dialogue.

A note on class/college citizenship: Please note that in this class, we will discuss the politics of race and gender, among other intersections of identity, such as class and sexuality. These conversations can be difficult, thus, I expect you to practice respect, listening, patience, and kindness with and towards each other. This includes how you speak to both me (your professor), your TA, and your fellow classmates. In this course, your ideas may be challenged and I ask that you are open to that challenge, meeting it with intellectual curiosity, respect for others' ideas and experiences, and empathy. I believe that ethical argumentation is imperative to a civil and just society and that is a value that I hope we form, instill, and engage with in this course. This is all to say, disagree with each other, with me, with your TA, but do so in a way that respectfully engages the other person's ideas.

If you are anxious about speaking in class, please let your TA know ASAP. Our goal is to get everyone talking and engaged because that is how we will all learn best! My hope in this course, is that you learn something cool (about television! And, writing! And, argumentation!), while also learning key skills from asking good questions to drafting and writing that will help you success in the CAT sequence and in college more broadly.

Discrimination and Harassment

UCSD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. This class adheres to those guidelines.

Alternative viewpoints are welcome in this classroom. *However, statements that are deemed racist, sexist, classist, ableist, homophobic, or otherwise discriminatory toward others in the class will not be tolerated and students will be asked to leave.* Students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and possess a diverse array of values and beliefs and the classroom must be a safe space to discuss opinions and ideas. As such, I will not tolerate harassment of any kind in my classroom.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability should (if needed) provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are then required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact your professor privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged. No retroactive accommodations can be provided. The CAT OSD liaison is Lynette Brossard: lbrossard@ucsd.edu.

Assignments:

The arc of this class follows the development of a singular group project. All the assignments are meant to inform, develop, and hone your ideas as you move throughout the term. In addition, the films we watch are meant to inspire ideas for you and the readings are supposed to contextualize and provide theoretical frames for your creativity.

[Reflection #1](#) (5%)

[Annotations: Summary & Synthesis](#) (15%)

[Literature Review](#) (10%)

[Film Proposal](#) (20%)

[Final Film](#) (30%)

Participation (10%)

- See CAT Participation expectations.
- In addition this term, you will attend at least ONE [Art + Tech Event](#) as part of your participation grade (additional options for Art + Tech Events on the prompt page). You will then respond to a prompt (click [HERE](#)) that asks you to consider the intersections between the event you attended and what you are learning in this course. Respond to the Art + Tech prompt only ONCE. Failure to attend Art + Tech events will lower your final participation grade by $\frac{1}{3}$. Please submit by Friday (by 11:59pm) of Week 10.

[Final Reflection](#) (10%)

Extra Credit: 90% of your section fills out the CAPES (for your TA & PB) and everyone in the section get + $\frac{1}{3}$ grade on your final reflection.

Course Calendar

1. Course calendar subject to change. Please make sure to refresh the page to make sure you are looking at the latest version.
2. Click [HERE](#) for a link to the screenings in the course that are on reserve. (Login with active directory info)
3. A few screenings are only available via Netflix (i.e. *Black Mirror* and *Okja*). I've noted which ones on the course calendar.
4. Readings are linked below as PDFs or html links or are from *They Say, I Say CAT Edition* (TSIS)
5. Please note that all screenings and readings are required (except for those noted as recommended) and must be completed before class on the day they are assigned.

6. Please note that many of the films and TV shows we watch will contain violence and sex. We will also discuss some disturbing topics. Please review the syllabus during Weeks 1 and 2 to make sure this is the right course for you.
7. **CAT 3 Collaborative Playlist: Sounds of the Future:**
https://open.spotify.com/user/1256147443/playlist/5TbTIUSBk8OTzShZh3UlaY?si=20b4gPsLRsg_3R8DNLLTeQ. Please add songs that strike you as futuristic as you see fit!

Week 1: Future Frameworks

Tuesday: Course Intro/Overview & Research 101

Thursday: Watch (in class): *Trip to the Moon* (1902)

Read: Walter Benjamin, "[Theses on the Philosophy of History](#)"

Watch: *Blade Runner* (1982)

Read: "[Cyberpunk cities fetishize Asian culture but have no Asians](#)"

Recommended: *Akira* (1988)

Friday: **Due: Reflection #1: On History & Imagining the Future**

Week 2: Future Frameworks, Part II

Tuesday: Read: [Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto"](#) (or, [PDF Version](#))

Focus on up to Part 3 (i.e. "The Homework Economy ...") for Tuesday (Finish for Thursday)

Recommended: "[POC in Horror & Fantasy](#)" & "[The Topics Dystopian Films Won't Touch](#)" & "[Why are dystopian films on the rise again?](#)"

Thursday: Cyborgs & Virtual Realities (& Close Reading Review & Research 101: Finding Sources)

Watch: *Black Mirror*, "USS Callister" (Season 4, Ep 1) (on Netflix)

Read: TSIS, "Developing a Research Plan" (pg. 293)

Friday: **Due: Annotation #1 Due (*Black Mirror*, USS Callister & Cyborg Manifesto) by 11:59pm**

Week 3: Technological Pasts, Presents, Futures

Tuesday: Watch (in class): *La Jetee* (1962)

Watch: *12 Monkeys* (1995)

Read: TSIS, "Finding Sources" (pg. 303) & "Synthesizing Ideas" (331)

Thursday: Time Travel & Literature Reviews & Collaboration

Read: TSIS, "Collaborating" (pg. 245)

Friday: **Due: Annotation #2 (*12 Monkeys* and Secondary Source #1 and #2) by 11:59pm**

Week 4: Social Structures: The Future of Surveillance

Tuesday: Big Brother & Surveillance Frameworks (& Writing a Proposal & Thinking about Audience)

Read: Michel Foucault, "[Panopticism](#)"

Recommended: "[Cambridge Analytica & Online Manipulation](#)" and "[AI-Spy](#)"

Thursday: Future Surveillance

Watch: *Black Mirror*, "Archangel" (on Netflix)

Read: TSIS, "Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing" (pg. 336) & "Acknowledging Sources, Avoiding Plagiarism" (pg. 349) & "Documentation" (pg. 354)

Recommended: *Sleep Dealer* & TSIS “Developing a Research Plan” (293)

Friday: **Due: Literature Review Due (Individual) by 11:59pm**

Week 5: Engineering, The Environment & Capitalism

*Donna Haraway event this week! More info coming soon!

Tuesday: The Environmental Movement, 101

Recommended: Carson Kilpatrick, “[Victory Over the Sun](#)” and Rachel Carson, “[Silent Spring, Part I](#)” and “[The Rise of Nuclear Fear: How We Learned to Fear the Radiation](#)”

Due: Group Project Pitch/Proposal--Rough draft by 11:59 pm

Thursday: Corporations & The Future of Food (& On the Basic Principles of Video Editing)

Watch: *Okja* (2017) (on Netflix)

Recommended: “[Conversation: Innovations for The Future of Food](#)” and “[Agroecology: A Path to Sustainable Development](#)”

Due: Annotations #3 (*Okja* & ONE of the recommended readings) by 11:59 pm

Week 6: Romance: Love in the Digital Age

Tuesday: Swipe Right: On Love & Technology

Read: “[Pew Report on Online Dating & Relationships](#),” Parts 1 and 2

Recommended: “[Can Gay Dating Apps Replace Gay Bars?](#)” & *Her* (2013)

Due: Final Group Project Pitch/Proposal & Group Contract & Works Cited by 11:59pm

Thursday: What does technology have to do with it? (& Oral Presentations)

Watch: *Black Mirror*, “Hang the DJ” (Season 4, Ep 4) & “San Junipero” (Season 3, Ep 3)
(On Netflix)

Read: TSIS “Using Visuals, Incorporating Sound” (pg. 447) & “Giving Presentations” (pg. 465)

Due: Annotation #4: (Either Reading from this week & ONE Black Mirror episode) by 11:59pm

Week 7: Family: Engineering Life

Tuesday: Cloning, Darwin, and Engineering Life

Recommended: “[Actors with Disabilities in Big Roles?](#)” & “[The Ethical Considerations](#)” & “[Unwanted Sterilization and Eugenics Programs in the U.S.](#)”

Due: Script & Storyboard of Video Due by 11:59pm

Thursday: Watch: *Gattaca* (1997)

Recommended: *The Handmaid’s Tale* (Ep 1 & 2)

Due: Annotations #5 (*Gattaca* & One of recommended readings from Week 7) by 11:59pm

Week 8: Revolutionary Futures: Afrofuturism

Tuesday: Recommended: “[Wakanda Forever](#): The Pleasures, The Politics, The Problems”

Due: Rough Cut of Final Video Project by 11:59pm

Thursday: Watch: *Black Panther*

Listen/Watch: Janelle Monae’s “[Dirty Computer](#)”

Recommended: *Space is the Place: Sun Ra and his Intergalactic Solar Arkestra*

Week 9: Global Futurism: Russian Futurism

Due: Final Video Project the Day you Present in Section

*Video must be uploaded to TritonEd by 11:59pm on Friday

Groups will present in section this week

Tuesday: Guest Lecture: Amelia Glaser

Thursday: Watch (in class): TBD Russian Futurist Film

Week 10: Final Projects & Wrapping It Up

Tuesday: Screen Best of Sections Final Projects

Due: Rough Draft Final Reflection

Thursday: Class Canceled! Happy Summer!

Finals Week

Final Reflection: Benjamin Reflection Revision + Portfolio due Tuesday by 11am (June 11).