

CAT 125:
Stories of Ourselves: Public Rhetorics of Identity

Instructor: Jennifer Marchisotto

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:30-5:30 pm via Zoom & by appointment

Teaching Assistants:

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Course Description:

In this course, we will focus on storytelling as a foundation for public rhetoric and practical communication. Whether you are preparing for graduate school, or plan to enter the workforce following graduation, you will be presenting yourself to new audiences through written and spoken words. Job applications, personal statements, even emails all tell stories about who we are. In this course we will think about how rhetorical choices shape written presentations of the self, and critically reflect on how those choices contribute to our public identities as we move within and between larger communities. We will discuss how different choices (for example humor, emotion, visual framing, etc.) shape the impact of narratives. Drawing on popular written and visual texts as models, we will discuss how to apply these choices in your own writing. We will engage works by Roxane Gay, Zadie Smith, Neil Gaiman, and others to better understand how identity shapes, and is shaped through, writing.

Ultimately this class should give you practical skills to help navigate your personal and professional lives post-college. This course will be a combination of lecture, discussion, and workshops all meant to help you hone your writing skills so that you can more effectively wield them in myriad future contexts.

Texts :

All texts are available digitally through Canvas.

You will need a Netflix subscription for weeks 4, 5, & 8 you can watch everything with a [30 day free trial](#) (week 8's viewing can be done in advance)

Grade Break Down:

Participation: 10%

Discussion Posts: 20%

CV/Resume: 20%

Personal Narrative: 20%

Presentation: 20%

Final Portfolio and Reflection: 10%

Course Structure:

In light of concerns over COVID-19, and in compliance with UCSD policy, all courses for Spring 2020 are being taught online. For this course, all lectures will be *asynchronous* (done on your own time). You will have 1-2 modules on Canvas for each week that will include tasks to be finished prior to discussion sections. These tasks will include brief video lectures, required readings/viewings,

and responses. The due date for each module will be in its title. All parts should be completed before that day's section. **If there is ever any confusion over what should be finished by each class, please speak to me or your TA.** Your discussion sections will be run *synchronously* (live) via Zoom.

Because the state of things is changing rapidly, please reach out with any concerns about access to digital materials. We want all students to be able to participate in the course equally and will make adjustments as needed.

Remote Student Campus Resources:

Check this frequently updated page for current information on how and where to access campus resources: <https://vcsa.ucsd.edu/news/covid-19-info.html>

Writing Hub Remote Services: <https://writinghub.ucsd.edu/what-we-do/remote-services.html>

International Center: <https://ispo.ucsd.edu/contact/index.html#ZOOM-ADVISING-HOURS>

Triton Food Pantry Updates: <https://basicneeds.ucsd.edu/food-security/pantry/index.html>

Counseling and Psychological Services:

<https://wellness.ucsd.edu/CAPS/services/Pages/update.aspx>

Discussion Boards:

Each week you will be asked to respond to our readings via Canvas. The responses will range in subject, from open reflection to more specific prompts for engagement. You may be asked to respond via text or through a short video. At times you will also be asked to respond to peers' posts. Guidelines for the responses will be included in each week's module.

Conduct:

Be respectful and kind to classmates and the instructor at all times. In this class we will be dealing with many sensitive issues. While I neither expect nor wish students to always agree on ideas, differences of opinion need to be discussed considerately. Please be respectful in all canvas posts and discussion sections. Because this is an online class, it may sometimes be difficult to understand tone, so please take care when responding to your peers. Any individual who, as a result of their words or behavior, silences their classmates will be held accountable. If you feel uncomfortable at any point because of the actions of a peer or instructor, please do not hesitate to reach out to myself or a TA.

If any student posts content that is offensive to others, intentionally or not, the post will be removed and either a TA or I will reach out to the author via email to discuss the issue.

Participation:

Participation includes:

- Completing modules on time
- Attending and participating in discussions consistently
- Reading all assigned readings fully and carefully
- Being present and engaged as an active participant and listener

There are many different ways you can contribute to our conversations. **You don't have to have a fully-formed interpretation of the text in order to make a positive contribution to our discussion.** Some excellent ways to contribute include pointing out a section you found particularly interesting or confusing, asking a classmate a follow-up question about something they have said, or offering textual evidence that either supports or complicates an interpretation one of your classmates has suggested. **If you are finding it difficult to join the conversations we are having in class, do not hesitate to talk to me.** I am happy to strategize with you about making our discussions more accessible to everyone.

Accessibility:

Everyone should have the opportunity to succeed and learn during our time together. My goal is to make full participation and success in this class accessible to all students. **If there is any feature of this course, from the reading to the assignments to the way we work together in class, that could be made more accessible to you, please discuss it with me.** I am willing to consider any appropriate modification that will enable you to experience more fully the works we will read and our engagement with them in class. **You do *not* have to disclose or document any disability or illness, physical or mental, to me or to anyone in order to discuss accommodations with me.**

In addition, there are many resources available to you through UCSD. The peer tutors at the **Writing Center** can help you with any writing assignment at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to final revisions. The **Office of Academic Support & Instructional Services** (OASIS) offers tutoring and support in both academic subjects and study skills. Both of these resources exist to help you get the most out of your education, and are highly recommended for *all* students. If you have a documented disability, the **Office for Students with Disabilities** (OSD) can support you in identifying and requesting relevant accommodations. Contact the OSD for further information: <http://disabilities.ucsd.edu>

I am committed to supporting undocumented students and students from mixed-status families, especially in this particularly challenging time, and I will accommodate immigration emergencies as I would any other emergency (medical, etc) in granting extensions or excusing absences. For more resources, legal advice, and information on your rights, consult the **Undocumented Student Services Center:** <http://undoc.ucsd.edu>

Email Account:

Check your inbox and Canvas daily for course announcements. I only respond to emails sent from your ucsd.edu account. If contacting me by email, please use appropriate email etiquette.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism is strictly prohibited. In general, plagiarism is defined as failing to cite quotations and borrowed ideas, to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks, and to put summaries and paraphrases in your own words. Plagiarism also refers to quotations and ideas from web sources. See “Avoiding Plagiarism” in the Reader Appendix for a more thorough discussion. **When in doubt, ask me for clarification.**

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to do their own work as outlined in the UCSD Policy on Academic Integrity, including the translation of work written in a language other than English. Also, it is against the

policy to “recycle” a paper written for one course and turn it in for credit in another course, including any CAT courses. All cases of suspicious, inappropriate, or academic misconduct are subject to disciplinary action.

Course Agenda (Subject to Change)

Week	Topic	Readings/Videos to Watch	Drafts and Assignments
1	Introduction: What is Rhetoric? What is Public Writing?	<p>“People Complaining About Whole Foods Oranges Need to Check Their Peeling Privilege” by Kim Sauder “The Tale of the Rose” by Emma Donoghue</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> “Shitty First Drafts” by Anne Lamott</p>	Go over prompt for Resume/CV Thursday in section
2	Representation and Power	<p>Chimamanda Adichie “The Danger of a Single Story” (TED Talk) Roxane Gay, “White Fever Dreams” Sara Ahmed, “Affective Economies”</p>	Draft 1 CV/Resume due Thursday before section
3	Audience: Who is Listening? Who is Talking Back?	<p>“I’m Not Your Inspiration, Thank You Very Much” by Stella Young (TED Talk) “The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action” by Audre Lorde “Welcome to Your Authentic Indian Experience™” by Rebecca Roanhorse</p>	
4	Context Matters: Genre and Place	<p>“Los Angeles” from <i>Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner</i> by David Chang (available on <i>Netflix</i>) “On Going Home” by Joan Didion</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> <i>S-Town</i> (podcast)</p>	<p>**Final Draft CV/Resume due Tuesday before section**</p> <p>Go over prompt for Personal Narrative in Section on Tuesday</p>
5	Breaking Form	<p><i>Nanette</i> by Hannah Gatsby (available on <i>Netflix</i>) “The Pornography of Genre, or the Genre of Pornography” by Neil Gaiman “When Twitter does what Journalism Can’t” by Roxane Gay</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> “Craftsmanship” by Virginia Woolf</p>	Draft 1 of Personal Narrative Due Thursday in Section
6	Individualism in the Age of	<p>“The Decade Beyoncé Made Herself into a Legend” by Michael Blackmon</p>	Draft 2 of Personal Narrative Due Thursday in Section

	Mechanical Reproduction	“ Beyoncé is the 21st Century’s Master of Leveling Up ” by Kiana Fitzgerald	
7	Claiming Space	“ The Enchanting Music of Sign Language ” by Christine Sun Kim (TED Talk) Selections from <i>Bad Feminist</i> and <i>Hunger</i> by Roxanne Gay	**Final Draft of your Personal Narrative due Tuesday before section** Go over Prompt for Presentation Bring an Idea for your Presentation to Section on Thursday
8	Digital Worlds and Expanding Media Contexts	“Philanthropy” and “Truthiness” from <i>The Colbert Report</i> by Stephen Colbert Listen to 2-3 “This I Believe” Speeches of your choice Watch an episode of your choice of <i>Patriot Act</i> by Hasan Minaj <i>Optional:</i> <i>More Perfect</i> (Podcast) <i>RadioLab</i> (Podcast)	Bring a Draft of ALL Slides (or the equivalent if doing a separate project) to Section on Thursday
9	Re-Defining (or defining again) “Public Writing”	No Readings	**Final Presentation Due Thursday**
10	Where Do We Go From Here?	“ On Optimism and Despair ” by Zadie Smith	**Course Portfolio and Reflection due 6/8**

Have a great Summer!!!