

CAT 3A: Surviving or Thriving

Narratives of Apocalypse and the Aftermath

Spring 2020

Instructor: Dr. Liz Gumm, Associate Director of Writing, Sixth College

Course Days & Times: MWF 8:00-8:50am

Location: Live Zoom Webinars - Access through Canvas

Dr. Gumm's Office Hours: By appointment only - T 11:00-2:00, W 9:00-2:00, and F 10:00-2:00

Office Location: Access through Canvas

Email: egumm@ucsd.edu

Course Description

This CAT 3 course will ask you to consider the ways that our future has been imagined, specifically in narrative and rhetorical strategies. From climate crisis to religious prophecies, we will look at how authors compose stories about the end of humanity and then imagine any life that persists post-apocalypse. Through an examination of the rhetorical and narrative choices of fiction, journalism, activism, etc., you will develop your own stories of apocalypse and the aftermath. In particular, you will conduct research on threats to human life or civilization and then produce your own narrative arguments about surviving or thriving beyond such threats. While much of our discussion will examine catastrophic rhetoric, we will also explore more nuanced rhetoric and evaluate the efficacy of such choices in argumentation. By the end of this course, you will be able to break down narratives of disaster, threat, and humanity—not to dismiss risks, but to better evaluate and respond to such risks and imagine the future.

A Disclaimer:

This course will most likely converge with our current social, environmental, and political climate. It was not my intention that this course reflect *exactly* our lived reality; but here we are. While I encourage you to take the skills and ideas of this class and apply them to the now, this is ultimately a class about the future and the role of research, writing, and creativity in designing that future. While we can take a more critical eye to the rhetoric, narrative, and affect of the now, our task is to envision a time that is yet to come, a paradigm shift. In that spirit, we will take this quarter as an opportunity to lift each other up in our educational journeys. If at any time course material feels too intense, or if the rhetoric and narrative of the class strikes you in an unsettling way, please speak to me or your TA.

We're in this all together to grow and learn.

Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

[Writing & Argumentation]

- Develop an ability to read, understand, critique, write, and make your own arguments and assumptions in texts in diverse genres including multimodal texts (such as film, television, posters, photography, and digital genres).
- Organize and support an argument effectively with useful evidence and clear analysis.
- Use the revision process consistently and effectively by clearly progressing from draft to draft and assignment to assignment.

[Research]

- Understand and evaluate relevant sources.
- Cite texts and arguments fairly and effectively.
- Use sources effectively by drawing key examples from research to support arguments, creativity, and art-making.
- Develop an independent research project and understand key components of research such as literature review (and annotated bibliography), proposal process, and revision.

[Collaboration & Art Making]

- Develop effective ways to collaborate with groups of peers.
- Use digital methods to enhance collaboration

Materials

- *They Say, I Say*, CAT 4th Edition[#]
- [*Parable of the Sower*](#) by Octavia Butler*
- Reliable access to Canvas and ucsd email
- Note taking materials for lecture and section

[#] *They Say, I Say* must be a CAT edition

* You may purchase digital copy of this text

Attendance

You create the majority of a class's success. Without the students, there is no class - only readings. Enrolling in a course means that you agree to be a part of a specific community for a specific term. I see attendance--including mine and the TAs--as a gesture of respect to our educational community. **This attendance is even more important now that we have moved to an online platform.** However, because of the current health crisis, attendance will look necessarily different.

I appreciate your respect for the following policies that I see as integral to a successful online course:

Lecture

- Lecture attendance is not required, but you do have a lecture component of your participation.
- I am a better teacher when students are present and engaged, so I would prefer for as many of you to attend the live lecture as possible. Attendance is an important component of creating a class community; while there are many of you, all of your contributions are important for everyone's learning, including mine!
- Please see the specific [directions for attendance at our Live Zoom Webinars](#).

Section

- Attendance at section is expected for this course. Your work during sections is important for your development in crafting an analytical argument, addressing alternative points of view, and revising - not simply editing - your writing. We never write nor analyze in a vacuum; thus, you should see your section as a writing community, of which you are an indispensable part. In many ways, your section meetings are composition labs during which you workshop ideas and strategies for your assignments.
- Please see the specific [directions for attendance at Live Zoom Section Meetings](#)
- Late arrivals and early departures are more significant to the functioning of sections. Students arriving later than 10 minutes to section (without TA approval) or leaving before the final 10 minutes of section (without TA approval) will be counted as absent.
- In the event of an absence, please let your TA know as soon as possible, preferably before the absence. Knowing about absences facilitates our ability to support you, particularly when assignments are due.
- While absences will not result in automatic failure, any absence will result in the loss of participation points.

Technology

Given that our courses this quarter are conducted online, a technology policy seems a little silly. However, for the success of our course, we need to follow some general etiquette with how we use this technology. These guidelines are applicable to live lecture, live section, and digital collaborations:

- Please mute yourself whenever you are not speaking; this avoids the distraction of environmental noise
- Please attend to your immediate environment to make it as least distracting as possible (visually and aurally) - For example, you may want to ban pets or roommates from the room
- Please do not attend live sessions if you are going to be actively engaged in another activity; online education is not an excuse to multitask. [Indeed, multitasking is one of the main causes for poor performance in online courses](#). If you are a student whose brain requires some doodling or other activity in order to listen well, you should let me and your TA know. Students who are actively on their phones or are clearly not engaged in the live session may be dismissed from the session by the host (instructor or TA).
- Be mindful of the chat function in Zoom - the default is that any comment you make will be made visible to the entire session, including the instructor; however, the chat function is a great place to ask for clarification, offer comments if you are shy, or pose questions.
- Recordings of lectures or sessions will be made available only to the specific course and only during the specific term.
- If you have technical difficulties, please keep your TA and instructor updated.

What you can expect of me...

- I will be prepared for lecture and invested in the material
- I will be enthusiastic and animated during discussions (probably 95% of the time)
- I will respond to emails within 48 hours
- I will be as invested in your work as you are
- I will treat your work with honesty and compassion
- I will learn as many names as I can
- I will make fun of myself and probably make very cheesy jokes
- I may curse, but I will try not to
- I will be willing to allow for extensions if you demonstrate engagement in the course and come speak with me early about needing one
- I will be a safe sounding board for ideas, whether related to your assignments or not
- I will take earnest feedback about the course seriously

What I expect of you...

- You will, when you do, attend lectures on time, with a good attitude
- You will attend section on time, with a good attitude
- You will take responsibility for your actions and feelings, especially as they manifest within the course
- You will do the work assigned, both readings and writings, to the best of your ability (even if what qualifies “best” changes)
- You will do your own work with your best effort (even if what qualifies “best” changes)
(See [UCSD Policies on Academic Integrity](#))
- You will read the syllabus and refer to it throughout the quarter
- You will treat your fellow classmates, your TAs, and myself with dignity; you will not engage in racist, sexist, classist, ablist, homophobic, transphobic, ethnocentric, fat-shaming, faith-shaming, or otherwise hateful communication. There is a difference between disrespectful/hateful speech and reasonable disagreement.
- You will offer your fellow writers honest and engaged critique.
- You will speak respectfully to me or your TA if you have any problems with the assignments or teaching methods; you will give us the chance to correct mistakes or address any miscommunication
- You will own your part of class culture (you will recognize that your experience with the class is in part your responsibility)

Grading Schema

The Culture, Art, and Technology Program of Sixth College makes use of a set grading schema, which means that certain letter grades correspond to specific numerical grades. This schema prevents grade inflation and point bargaining. All major assignments (those with a draft and final submission) and participation will be assessed according to the grading schema.

Assignment Grading Schema:

A+ = 97%	A = 95%	A- = 92%
B+ = 87%	B = 85%	B- = 82%
C+ = 77%	C = 75%	C- = 72%
D = 65% (no D+ or D-) ¹	F = 50%	

Assignments

Below are brief descriptions of our assignments. More detailed assignment descriptions can be found on Canvas under the Assignments Page. All assignments should ascribe to [UCSD's policy of academic integrity](#).

Major Assignments

Assignment 1: [Arguing The Apocalypse](#) - 20%
(includes draft, draft reflection, final, and final reflection)

Assignment 2: [Narrating The Aftermath](#) (Group Project) - 30%
(includes 2 group components - pitch and project - and 1 individual component - rhetorical reflection)

Final Portfolio: [Mediating The Future](#) - 20%
(includes a multimodal personal reflection on self, course subject, and an evaluation of another group's project)

Minor Assignments

[Bibliographic Responses](#) (2) - 10%

[Peer Reviews](#) (2) - 10%

Section Participation - 5%

[Lecture Participation](#) - 5%

¹ While a D is technically a passing grade, you should know that any work that receives C- or below is considered marginal in acceptability; be wary of presenting such work for a public audience. If you take this course P/NP, you must make at least 72.5% overall to pass the course.

Requirements for Written Assignments

Document

- Heading in the top left corner of the first page:
 - Your Name
 - Your TA/Section
 - My Name & Course Name
 - Date
- Title centered after the heading
- Main text left aligned
- Double spacing
- Last name and page number in top right corner
- 1" margins on all sides
- Size 12 font
- Word Count at the end of the document
- Works Cited on a separate page
- MLA format for document and citations

TA Sections

A01	8551	MW	9-9:50	Melinda	mbarnada@ucsd.edu
A02	8552	MW	10-10:50	Melinda	
A03	8553	MW	10-10:50	Heather	hpaulson@ucsd.edu
A04	8554	MW	11-11:50	Heather	
A05	8555	MW	12-12:50	Lucas	lbailor@ucsd.edu
A06	8556	MW	1-1:50	Lucas	
A07	8557	MW	2-2:50	Richard	rvagnino@ucsd.edu
A08	8558	MW	3-3:50	Richard	
A09	8559	MW	4-4:50	Cecelia	copatken@ucsd.edu
A10	8560	MW	4-4:50	Eugene	eychua@ucsd.edu
A11	8561	MW	5-5:50	Cecelia	
A12	8562	MW	5-5:50	Eugene	
A13	8563	MW	6-6:50	Alissa	amtu@ucsd.edu
A15	8565	MW	7-7:50	Alissa	
A17	8567	MW	11-11:50	Townsend	tmontill@ucsd.edu
A18	8568	MW	12-12:50	Townsend	

Course Schedule

*This schedule is subject to change. Please pay attention to weekly announcements by your instructor and TA. Any reading listed should be read **before** the date under which it is listed. Any reading without a hyperlink can be found in the “Readings” module on Canvas site (or in your TSIS textbook).

Week 1 - Introductions, Tutorials, and Realities

Monday March 30

- *Lecture - Our Learning Community in a Digital Space*
- Section - Creating Community Online

Wednesday April 1

- *Lecture - Course Organization, Themes, and Pacing*
- Section - Imagining the Future

Friday April 3

- *Lecture - Key Concepts of Narrative and Rhetoric*

Week 2 - What is the Apocalypse?...an apocalypse?

Monday April 6

- *Lecture - Defining Apocalypse and World-making*
 - **Read** Selected poems in Canvas
 - Suggested reading: Walter Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History”
- Section - Developing Topics & Questions
 - **Read** TSIS ch. 20 “Getting Started on Research”

Wednesday April 8

- *Lecture - Stories, Knowledge, and Truth*
 - **Read** Walter Benjamin’s “The Storyteller,” sections I, II, IV, V, VI, VIII, IX, XIII, XIV, XV, and XIX
- Section - Finding and Annotating Sources
 - **Read** TSIS ch. 28 “Annotated Bibliographies”

Friday April 10

- *Lecture - Data and Communication during Crisis*
 - **Read** Chelsea Manning’s “The Dystopia we Signed up For” OR Myles Gough’s “Here’s the Safest Hideout in a Zombie Apocalypse, according to Statistics”
 - **Listen** to 1 hour of Orson Welles’ [War of the Worlds](#) OR 2 episodes of Shawn Christensen’s [Blackout](#)

Week 3 - Who is telling this story?

DUE SUNDAY April 12 @ 11:59pm: Bibliographic Response #1

Monday April 13

- *Lecture - Time, Evil, & Authority*
 - **Read** Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* ch. 1-6
- Section - Evaluating Sources
 - **Read** TSIS ch. 22 "Evaluating Sources"
 - **Bring** at least 2 different kinds of sources to section

Wednesday April 15

- *Lecture - Story & Discourse*
 - **Read** Susan Sontag's "The Imagination of Disaster"
 - Suggested Reading: The Book of Revelations
- Section - Thesis Writing & Drafting
 - **Review** TSIS ch. 23 "Synthesizing Sources" & ch. 28 "Lit Review" pp.288-291

Friday April 17

- *Lecture - Power, Structure, and Community*
 - **Read** Margaret Atwood's "Time Capsule Found on the Dead Planet"

Week 4 - What is this story for?

DUE SUNDAY April 19 @ 11:59pm: DRAFT of Assignment #1 + Draft Reflection

Monday April 20

- *Lecture - Tragic and Comic Narrative Frames*
 - **Read** *Parable* ch. 7-13
- Section - Integrity and Collaboration
 - **Read** TSIS ch. 16 p.180 "Online Collaboration"

Wednesday April 22

- *Lecture - Tellers, Listeners, Those Told About*
 - **Read** Judith Butler's "Violence, Politics, and Mourning"
 - Suggested Reading: Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History?"
- Section - Planning a Group Project

Friday April 24

- *Lecture - Multimedia & Crisis*
 - **Read** Lacy Johnson's "How to Mourn a Glacier"
 - **Watch** John Oliver's "[Doomsday Video](#)"

Week 5 - Visions of Dystopia

DUE SUNDAY April 26 @ 11:59pm: Peer Review of Assignment #1

Monday April 27

- *Lecture - Defining Dystopia*
 - **Read** *Parable* ch. 14-19
- Section - Multimodal Composition: Arguments
 - **Read** TSIS ch. 33 “Designing Text”

Wednesday April 29

- *Lecture - Speculating: Dystopia*
 - **Read** Eugene Thacker’s “Clouds of Unknowing”
- Section - Multimodal Composition: Narratives

Friday May 1

- *Lecture - Tropes, Values,*
 - **Watch** *Equilibrium* and/or *Children of Men*

Week 6 - Logics of Dystopia

DUE SUNDAY May 3 @ 11:59pm: FINAL Draft of Assignment #1

Monday May 4

- *Lecture - Narrating Time*
 - **Read** *Parable* ch. 20-25
- Section - Collaborative Writing
 - **Read** TSIS ch. 29 “Proposals” 299-301

Wednesday May 6

- *Lecture - Speculating: Dystopia*
 - **Read** Ursula Le Guin’s “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas”
 - *Suggested reading: Elizabeth Bear’s “And the Deep Blue Sea”*
- Section - Collaborative Writing
 - **Read** TSIS ch. 35 “Giving Presentations”

Friday May 8

- *Lecture - Language & Values of the Future*
 - **Read** Katherine Dunn’s “On Cussing”

Week 7 - Visions of Utopia

DUE SUNDAY May 10 @ 11:59pm: Bibliographic Response #2

Monday May 11

- *Lecture - Narrative Space & Defining Utopia*
 - **Read** Thomas More's *Utopia*, excerpts
- Section - Abstract as Recursive Writing
 - **Read** TSIS ch. 27 "Abstracts"

Wednesday May 13

- *Lecture - Finding Utopia*
 - **Read** John Porcellino's *Thoreau at Walden*, excerpts
- Section - Evaluation as Recursive Writing
 - **Read** "Justifying an Evaluation" excerpts

Friday May 15

- *Lecture - Speculating Utopia*
 - **Read** Susan Perkins Gilman's *Herland*, excerpts

Week 8 - Ethics of Utopia

Lectures will be pre-recorded for this week. Watch on your own time and complete the applicable lecture participation activities before 11:59pm on Sunday June 7. You will need to watch *Black Panther* in our Course Reserves for lecture preparation.

Lecture Topics:

- *Ethos & Kairos of Utopia*
- *Rhetoric of Utopia*
- *Imagination & Research*

Monday May 18

- Section - Pitch Proposal & Live Feedback

Wednesday May 20

- Section - Pitch Proposal & Live Feedback

Week 9 - Imagination Week

Lectures are cancelled for this week; see directions under Week 8

Schedule a time for your project group to meet with Dr. Gumm this week.

Wednesday May 27

- Section - Revising

Week 10 - Designing the Future

DUE SUNDAY May 31 @ 11:59pm: FINAL of Assignment #2

Lectures are cancelled for this week; instead, visit the class project page and explore at least 5 projects from the class before you attend your section.

Monday June 1

- *Lecture - Project Gallery Walk*
- Section - Final Portfolio

Wednesday June 3

- *Lecture - Project Gallery Walk*
- Section - Reflective Discussion on Class Projects

Finals Week

Wednesday June 10

- DUE @ 11:59pm: Final Portfolio