

**CAT 125R:**  
**Stories of Ourselves: Public Rhetorics of Identity**

Instructor: Jennifer Marchisotto

Contact: [jmarchis@ucsd.edu](mailto:jmarchis@ucsd.edu)

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

TAs:

Berk Schneider	<a href="mailto:bwschnei@ucsd.edu">bwschnei@ucsd.edu</a>	Sections A01-03
Neon Mashurov	<a href="mailto:nmashuro@ucsd.edu">nmashuro@ucsd.edu</a>	Sections A04-06
Dylan Hallingstadt	<a href="mailto:dhalling@ucsd.edu">dhalling@ucsd.edu</a>	Sections A07-09
Eugene Chua	<a href="mailto:eychua@ucsd.edu">eychua@ucsd.edu</a>	Sections A10-12
Mateus Guzzo	<a href="mailto:mguzzo@ucsd.edu">mguzzo@ucsd.edu</a>	Sections A13-15
Klara Feenstra	<a href="mailto:kfeenstr@ucsd.edu">kfeenstr@ucsd.edu</a>	Sections A16-18

***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 2-5. You can watch everything with a [30 day free trial](#).

***Grade Break Down:***

Personal Narrative: 25%

Presentation: 25%

Participation: 10%

Discussion Board: 15%

Reflective Journal: 15%

Final Reflection: 10%

### ***Course Structure:***

For this course, all lectures will be *asynchronous* (pre-recorded and watched on your own time). Each week of the course will have a module containing all recorded lectures, readings, and discussion board and reflection assignments. Each module will also include a “to-do” list for that week listing all expectations and due dates. **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.

In light of the on-going impact COVID-19 is having on all of our lives, I ask for both patience and empathy toward your classmates, your instructor, and, most importantly yourself! Please stay in contact and let me know ASAP if you could use support in any way—whether accessing course materials, having tech issues, finding a resource to support your holistic health, or needing to miss class. Because I want you to prioritize your own health, self-care, and support for loved ones, **I will provide alternative work and extensions as needed.** If in doubt, send me an email!

Because the state of things is changing rapidly, please reach out with any concerns about access to digital materials. We want all students to have equitable access to course materials 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>

### ***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.*

### ***Discussion Boards:***

Discussion boards throughout the quarter will be used to promote community and conversation about course topics. Summer session moves fast! The discussion boards should provide a space to explore ideas in preparation for section, as well as continue discussions introduced in section. Myself and your TAs will also watch and participate in the discussion boards each week.

Each week you will make three posts on a discussion board. One post should be an original response to provided questions posted before your second section of the week. The other two should respond to your peers. You may respond to another original post or respond to a peer's response (either to your post or another's). The questions will ask you to respond to the readings for each week. They will range from open reflection to more specific prompts for engagement. Posts should be approximately 150 words.

### ***Reflective Journals:***

Throughout the course you will have 3 Reflective Journal assignments. These journals are meant to be a space for you to explore and reflect on your experiences of both the course and of the world more broadly. You will receive a prompt to guide your response but may focus it as you like as long as you respond to the overall questions. Journals should be 400-500 words in length.

### ***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.

NOTE: If you are unable to attend section synchronously, *please* speak to your TA ASAP to arrange alternative ways to participate. We understand that this is not a "regular" quarter. We also know that current events are impacting certain communities more deeply than others. We want to work with you to make sure you feel comfortable and confident in your engagement with the class and course materials. Communication will be very important to effectively accommodating students to the best of our ability.

### ***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](http://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.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Video Lectures</b>	<b>Read and Watch</b>	<b>Drafts and/or Assignments due</b>
1	Introduction to Public Rhetoric and the Power of Storytelling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Introduction</li><li>2. What is Public Rhetoric?</li><li>3. Affective Storytelling</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Roxane Gay, “<a href="#">White Fever Dreams</a>”</li><li>2. Chimamanda Adichie “<a href="#">The Danger of a Single Story</a>” (TED Talk)</li></ol>	Journal #1 due by Friday @ midnight

			<p>3. <a href="#">“Yes, It *Is* About Disability: Reflections on Disability and Media Criticism After Sundance 2020”</a> by Laura Dorwart</p> <p>Optional:  <a href="#">“People Complaining About Whole Foods Oranges Need to Check Their Peeling Privilege”</a>  by Kim Sauder  “Affective Economies” by Sara Ahmed</p>	
2	Who, What, Where, and How: Audience, Context, and Form	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who is talking? Who is talking back?</li> <li>How to use genre effectively</li> <li>Considering all the dimensions of Rhetoric</li> <li>Revision Techniques</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">“I’m Not Your Inspiration, Thank You Very Much”</a> by Stella Young (TED Talk)</li> <li>“Welcome to Your Authentic Indian Experience™” by Rebecca Roanhorse</li> <li>“The Pornography of Genre, or the Genre of Pornography” by Neil Gaiman</li> <li>“The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action” by Audre Lorde</li> <li><i>Nanette</i> by Hannah Gatsby (<i>Netflix</i>)</li> </ol> <p>Optional:  <a href="#">“Hallmark Movies are Fascist Propaganda”</a> by Amanda Marcotte  <i>Crip Camp</i> (<i>Netflix</i>)  “Los Angeles” from <i>Breakfast, Lunch, &amp; Dinner</i> by David Chang (<i>Netflix</i>)</p>	<p>Personal Statement draft 1 due @ 2<sup>nd</sup> section of the week.</p> <p>Journal #2 due by Saturday @ midnight</p>
3	Claiming Space	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asserting power and challenging dominant narratives through rhetoric</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selections from <i>Bad Feminist</i> and <i>Hunger</i> by Roxanne Gay</li> <li>Manifestos (a selection)</li> <li><a href="#">“The Enchanting Music of Sign Language”</a> by Christine Sun Kim (TED Talk)</li> </ol>	<p>Personal Statement draft 2 due @ 1<sup>st</sup> section of the week.</p>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moving from the personal to the public</li> <li>Choosing a Topic</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">“Redesigning Blatantly Racist Brands is Not Enough”</a> by Debbie Millman</li> <li><a href="#">“No Warning Sign or Symbol: Crazy Ex-Girlfriend Exposes the Double Standards of Mental Illness”</a> by Laura Dorwart</li> </ol>	<p>Personal statement final draft due Friday by midnight</p>
4	Speaking Up & Speaking Out	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making Claims</li> <li>Reading with all our senses</li> <li>Integrating Sources</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Philanthropy” and “Truthiness” from <i>The Colbert Report</i> by Stephen Colbert</li> <li>Selections from <i>Last Week Tonight</i></li> <li>Listen to 2-3 “This I Believe” Speeches of your choice</li> <li>Watch an episode of your choice of <i>Patriot Act</i> by Hasan Minaj</li> </ol> <p>Optional:  <i>More Perfect</i> (Podcast)  <i>RadioLab</i> (Podcast)</p>	<p>Draft of presentation (slides and script) due @ 1<sup>st</sup> section of the week.</p>
5	Defining “Public Rhetoric”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where do we go from here?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">“On Optimism and Despair”</a> by Zadie Smith</li> <li><i>Douglass</i> by Hannah Gatsby (<i>Netflix</i>)</li> </ol>	<p>Presentation final draft due by 1<sup>st</sup> section of the week.</p> <p>Journal #3 due by Wednesday @ midnight</p> <p>Final reflection due Friday @ midnight.</p>