

Course Description: <https://sixth.ucsd.edu/cat/courses/cat-125-and-cat-125r.html>

Required Texts & Technology

- Netflix subscription (week 2-4)
- Access to Canvas & Course Reserves
- Notebook & Writing Utensil
- Recommended: *They Say, I Say CAT Edition*

Course Calendar

Please note readings and screenings are liable to change as the class progresses. I will never add additional readings or assignments, but may revise and substitute what is already here (If I change anything, I will give you lots of notice and reminders!). All screenings and readings should be done before class the day that they are on the calendar (unless stated otherwise). If you have readings that you think would be a great fit, please send them my way!

Weeks 1-3: The first half of this course asks you to turn inward and the authors we read and media we watch will demonstrate ways to do this, particularly incorporating personal experience and memoir into broader political conversations. These narratives are all meant as fodder for thinking about how you narrate your own life, experience, and movement through the world and how those stories are both political and powerful.

Weeks 3-5: The second half of this course turns those same conversations outward, considering how to tell politically impactful stories on topics of your choice. This part of the course asks you to take what you are concerned about, do some research, and then practice how you inform and persuade an audience (i.e. this class) about a topic near and dear to your heart/mind/passion.

Week 1: Introduction to 125/R & Stories and Power

Topics: Personal Narrative, Storytelling, Power & Permission

Materials:

- Read:
 - Ocean Vuong, "[Someday I'll Love Ocean Vuong](#)"
 - Gilbert, "[Curiosity and Devotion to Inquisitiveness](#)"
 - Emily McCrary-Ruiz-Esparza, [Generation Amazing!!! How We're Draining Language of Its Power](#) (2022)
 - Abdellah Taia, "[Oum Zahra Goes to the Movies,](#)" *Another Morocco* (2017)
- Watch:
 - "[The Power of Vulnerability](#)"
- Listen:
 - [Finding Fred, "A Genius of Empathy"](#) (Ep 1)
 - "[\(EP 18\) PT 9- UNDER THE BLACKLIGHT: NARRATING THE NIGHTMARE &\(RE\)IMAGINING THE POSSIBLE](#)"

Assignments:

CV/Resume: due Wednesday 8/9 by 11:59pm: After Resume/CV Workshop, upload your revised Resume/CV here. When you do so, write a short (100 word) reflection where you briefly discuss what stands out to you as your most key experience(s) on this document in terms of what you are hoping to do after college.

Reflection #1 Personal Narrative Proposal: due Sunday 8/13 by 11:59pm: Write a quick proposal (200-300 words) for your personal narrative. Your proposal should be ONE paragraph and address 1) your topic 2) your audience 3) the genre of your essay. Be as specific as you can in this as that will help support you in the drafting process. As you begin drafting, this proposal might be revised to become the first paragraph of your essay. (Complete/Incomplete)

[Weekly Annotations & Reflections: due Wednesday before class](#)

Week 2: Laughter, Joy, and Pain & Organizing Silences and Creating Space

Topics: emotional appeal

Materials:

- Watch *Nanette* (Netflix)
- Read:
 - Roxanne Gay, "[Some Jokes are Funnier Than Others](#)"
 - Audre Lorde, "[The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action](#)"
 - Hidden Brain, [Less is More](#)
 - Vauhini Vara, *Ghosts* (2021)
 - [UC Personal Statements](#) & [Statements of Purpose](#)

Optional:

- Gloria Anzaldúa "[Speaking in Tongues](#)"
- [Joseph Azam, "Last, First, Middle"](#)

Assignments:

[Personal Essay Draft #1 Due Wednesday before class for Peer Review](#)
([Peer Review Directions](#))

[Personal Essay Final Draft Due by Sunday, 11:59pm](#)

Week 3: Telling a Story: Fashion & On Curiosity and Asking Questions

Topics: logical appeals

Materials:

- Read:
 - Marita Golden, [My Black Hair: a Tangled Story of Race and Politics in America](#) (2015)
 - Tanisha C. Ford, "Dashiki" chapter 1 of [Dressed in Dreams](#)
 - Nadra Kareem Nittle, [A Guide to Understanding and Avoiding Cultural Appropriation](#) (2021)
 - Minh-Ha T. Pham, [Fashion's Cultural Appropriation Debate: Pointless](#) (2014)
 - Review: Gilbert, "[Curiosity and Devotion to Inquisitiveness](#)"
- Watch:
 - "[Examined Life](#)" (2008)
 - "[The Medium is the Message](#)" (Video)
 - Oscar-winning short film [Hair Love](#) (2019)

→ Monday/Tuesday class: write in-class reflection on the personal essay

Due Wednesday: Weekly Annotations & Reflections

Reflection #2 due Sunday: Public Performance Proposal: Write a quick proposal (150-250 words) for your public performance. Your proposal should include 1) a one-paragraph description of your topic, and 2) a mood board with pictures, colors, and fonts that communicate the general feel of your presentation and showcase how you intend to use your slides to support your thesis or central claim effectively.

Week 4: Turning Out: Questions and Researching Answers (Example about Food) & Talking About your Stuff

Materials:

- Watch *Chef's Table*, "Mashama Bailey" (Vol 6, Ep 1) & "[Fried Chicken is Common Ground](#)" (Osayi Endolyn)
- Read:
 - If you don't have Netflix access: On topic about food and race this week, an amazing food writer who is in the episode we watched this week, "[When White People say Plantation.](#)"
 - Chantha Nguon & Kim Green, "[The Gradual Extinction of Softness](#)" (2021)
 - Tom Chiarella, "[The Invisible Grip](#)" & "[How to Tell a Dragon Slaying Story](#)"
- Listen:
 - "[1619, 'The Birth of American Music,' \(Episode 3\)](#)
 - "[How to Save a Planet, 'Black Lives Matter & the Climate'](#)"

Assignments:

Due Wednesday: [Weekly Annotations & Reflections](#)

Due **SUNDAY**: Public Performance (Rough Draft) ([Peer Review Directions](#))

[For 125R](#) and for [125](#)

Week 5: The Internet and Digital Decluttering & On Reflection

Note: In 125 courses, speeches will happen in person and be performed in class during Week 5

Read:

- Roxanne Gay, "[When Twitter Does What Journalism Can't](#)"
- Tom Chatfield, "[The Attention Economy](#)"
- Tim Kreider, "[The Busy Trap](#)"
- [The Dolly Parton Challenge](#)
- Frank Pasquale, "[The Algorithmic Self](#)"
- **Recommended:** "[The Danger of Fake Positivity & Spiritual Bypassing](#)"

For 125R due by Friday at 11:59pm posted to the discussion board: Video/Speech (Final Draft)

For 125: Sign up to perform in class during Weeks 5

[Final Reflection Due by Sunday at 11:59pm](#)

Additional Readings & Screenings:

Arielle Bernsetin, "[Mari Kondo and the Privilege of Clutter](#)"

Chef's Table, "Cristina Martinez" (Vol 5, Ep 1) (Netflix)

Phoebe Bronstein, "[Our Modern Attempt to Control Pregnancy is Just another Attempt to Control Women's Bodies](#)" & "[Violently Inclined](#)" & "[Quiet Times](#)"

Kristi Coulter, "[Enjoli](#)"

Frederick Douglass, "[What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?](#)"

Hannah Gadsby, "[Three Ideas. Three Contradictions. Or not.](#)"
Roxane Gay, "A Tale of Three Coming Out Stories" (in *Bad Feminist*)
Roxane Gay, "[What fullness is](#)"
"[This I Believe Speeches](#)"
Myriam Gurba, "[Pendeja, You Ain't My Steinbeck](#)"
"Introduction," [Nonbinary: Memoirs of Gender & Identify](#)
bell hooks, "[Moving Beyond Pain](#)"
Wayne Koestenbaum, "[My 80s](#)"
NPR, "[She's Funny](#)" (NPR Special Column)
[NYT article on COVID & Mental Health](#)
David Sedaris, "[Stepping Out](#)"
Jenny Slate, *Stage Fright* (Netflix)
Sarah Todd, "[What Rescue Dogs Can Teach us about Vulnerability](#)"
Amy Schumer, *Growing* (Netflix)
Alexandra Schwartz, "[Improving Ourselves to Death](#)"
"[The Subaltern](#)"
Ocean Vuong, "[Someday I'll Love Ocean Vuong](#)"
Wambui Wainaina, "[Biographical Friction](#)"
Ali Wong, *Baby Cobra* (Netflix)

PS If you have personal essays you think are awesome, please share with me and I'll add them to the list!