



CAT 125: Public Rhetorics of Identity

Winter 2024

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Marchisotto

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Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 11:30am-1:30pm & by appointment

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Course Description

CAT 125 courses are 4-unit, upper-division writing and communication classes in which students focus on translating skills developed in lower-division writing courses into writing after college and public rhetoric. CAT 125R is the online version of CAT 125. Please note that students must only take one of these two courses to fulfill their upper-division writing requirement. Students must have completed the lower-division writing sequence—CAT 1, CAT 2, and CAT 3—before taking CAT 125 or CAT 125R.

Course Topic

In this CAT 125, 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 e-mails 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.

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

Required Texts/Technology

- Access to Canvas
- *They Say, I Say* CAT 5th Edition
- Netflix subscription during week 3

Course Objectives

By the end of the quarter, you should be able to:

- Develop increased experience and proficiency in public presentation, documentation, and curation.
- Direct written, spoken, or digital compositions to multiple audiences.
- Examine their own authority as writers and understand how different genres and citation conventions are appropriate for establishing credibility in different contexts.

Course Policies

Communication

In CAT, it is our hope that in this course we will develop a supportive learning community that fosters discussion, engagement, and excitement. Often, we will engage in the course material through the sharing of ideas, questions, and personal experiences. “Honesty, listening for understanding, a willingness to share your ideas, and respect for self and others” are basic guidelines that can help create a positive learning environment. Your participation and feedback are important to the success of the course and I welcome your thoughts throughout the term on how we might improve class processes that will encourage effective communication and dialogue.

On Inclusion and Creating an Equitable Classroom:

Please note that in this class, we will discuss the politics of race, and gender, among other intersections of identity, such as class, ability, 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), 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.

Etiquette and Conduct

CAT students are expected to comply with the [UCSD Principles of Community](#). This means you should always:

- Be respectful and kind to classmates and the instructor at all times. Our class will often deal with sensitive issues. While I neither expect nor wish students to always agree on ideas,

differences of opinion need to be discussed considerately. Any individual who, as a result of their words or behavior, silences their classmates will be held accountable.

- *Respect Diversity.* Be sensitive to the rich and diverse, multi-cultural community in which we are participating, and show respect to authors and fellow attendees at all times. Please avoid any language that is—or that could be construed as—offensive toward others. Racist, sexist, and heterosexist comments are unacceptable, as are derogatory and/or sarcastic comments and jokes directed at religious beliefs, disabilities, weight, and age.

My Responsibility to the Course:

- I will prepare for class thoughtfully and with enthusiasm.
- I will respond to emails within 48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays)
- I will treat your work with honesty and compassion
- 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 feedback about the course seriously

Your Responsibility to the Course:

- You will participate in discussion section thoughtfully and on time.
- You will attend section on time, ready to participate
- You will do the work assigned, both readings and writings, to the best of your ability
- You will do your own work with your best effort (See [UCSD Policies on Academic Integrity](#))
- You will offer your fellow writers honest and engaged critique.
- You will speak respectfully to me if you have any problems with the assignments or teaching methods; you will give me 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)

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.
- Self-Evaluations and Reflections are also a crucial part of this course. I will ask you to 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.

Participation and Attendance

Participation includes:

- Being present and engaged as an active participant and listener
- Contributing to small and large group discussions
- Attending and participating class consistently
- Completing in-class writing assignments
- Reading all assigned readings fully and carefully

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.

Absences:

- You are allowed 4 absences from discussion section without penalty. For every additional absence, you will lose 1/3 a letter on your course grade.
- Arriving more than 10 minutes late for section two times counts as one absence.

These absences are yours to use as you choose. If you have an emergency or if there are any extenuating circumstances that would cause you to miss more than a week and a half of class, please let me know as soon as you are able so that I can make sure to provide any necessary support.

Accommodations:

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 readings to the assignments to the way we work together in class, that could be made more accessible to you, please discuss it with me as soon as possible. I am willing to consider any modification that will enable you to experience the class more effectively. You do *not* have to disclose or document any disability or illness, physical or mental, to me or to anyone else 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>

According to the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), “Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the OSD. Students are required to present their AFA letters to the MCWP Program Representative/OSD liaison in advance so that accommodations can be arranged.” Contact OSD at (858) 534-4382, osd@ucsd.edu. Per university policy, OSD accommodations are not retroactive. The CAT OSD liaison is Lynette Brossard: lbrossard@ucsd.edu.

CalFresh & Basic Needs Information

If you are facing food insecurity, we encourage you to contact calfresh@ucsd.edu, call (858) 246-5581, or visit the [CalFresh Website](#). For more information on food and housing resources, please visit the [Basic Needs Center](#) or **The HUB Basic Needs Center** located at the Original Student Center, Building A, Room E-100, to the left of the Triton Food Pantry.

Assignment Submission and Late Work

- All written assignments must be submitted to Canvas, with the exception of in-class work.
- All assignments must be formatted according to [MLA guidelines](#) including a header clearly identifying your name, your TA’s name, and other required information.
- In order to receive a letter grade, all assignments must be submitted through Turnitin on Canvas.
- Assignments are due on or before the due date and time listed. Failure to submit on time will result in the loss of 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late including weekends. If the assignment is more than a week late, you will receive an F.
 - This includes draft deadlines for the major assignments. While drafts are not given a formal letter grade (they are assessed on a complete/incomplete basis), failure to submit them on time will result in the penalty noted above.
- Make-up or late engagement work must be approved first. In other words, engagement work not turned in on time will receive no credit, unless the instructor or TA has granted an exception.

Academic Integrity

UCSD has a university-wide Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, published annually in the General Catalog, and online <https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/>. All students must read and be familiar with this Policy. All suspected violations of academic integrity will be reported to UCSD’s Academic Integrity Coordinator. Students found to have violated UCSD’s standards for academic integrity may include suspension or dismissal, and academic sanctions may include failure of the assignment or failure of the course.

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

Major Assignments- 55%

1. [Personal Essay](#) (25%)
2. [Public Performance](#) (30%)

Minor Assignments-35%

1. [Reflections](#) (3 total) (20%) Graded complete/incomplete
2. [Final Reflection](#) (15%)

Participation- 10%

1. This includes in class participation, writing assignments, attendance, and the [annotation and reflection assignments](#).

Grading Policies

- [CAT Writing Rubric](#)
- For purposes of **final course grades** as calculated by Canvas's gradebook, the following ranges will determine letter grades submitted to eGrades:
 - A (93.6-100)
 - A- (89.6-93.5)
 - B+ (86.6-89.5)
 - B (83.6-86.5)
 - B- (79.6-83.5)
 - C+ (76.6-79.5)
 - C (73.6-76.5)
 - C- (69.6-73.5)
 - D (60-69.5)
 - F (0-59.9)
- If you feel as though you earned a grade different than what you received on an assignment you may request a regrade. All disputes over grades must be conducted according to the following guidelines:
 - **Wait 48 hours after receiving a grade before disputing it.**
 - Contact me for an appointment to discuss the grade.
 - Attend your appointment having read my comments and the CAT rubric thoroughly.
 - After you have discussed your assignment and feedback, if you still feel as though you earned a grade different from what you received, may you request a regrade. To request a regrade you must write a letter to me stating your case and providing specific evidence as to why you believe your grade should be changed. Such evidence must discuss elements of your writing, including thesis, use of analysis, organization, and argumentation.
 - I will review your letter and the assignment(s) in question and make a decision based on that evidence. However, please note that I reserve the right to lower your grade should I feel it was originally graded too generously.

Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

****PLEASE NOTE:** Many of the readings in this class deal with content that may be triggering. The texts discuss topics such as violence, racism, sexism, and ableism among others. I will do my best to provide content warnings for specific readings; however, I cannot anticipate all potential triggers. If you have specific concerns about content please speak with me. I will not require you to disclose any specific information, but am happy to help you develop a strategy for engaging with the course materials in a safe way.**

All assignments should be completed before the following class meeting.

Week 1- Introduction to the Course

1/8-1/12

Monday: Introduction to the Course

- Homework:
 - Read “[Someday I’ll Love Ocean Vuong](#)” by Ocean Vuong
 - Read “[Affective Economies](#)” by Sara Ahmed

Wednesday: Defining Public Rhetoric

- Homework:
 - Read “[Curiosity and Devotion to Inquisitiveness](#)” by Gilbert
 - Be prepared to discuss what you hope to do after graduation and bring in a draft of your CV/Resume if you have one.
 - For information about what a CV/Resume is/should be see [here](#).

Friday: CV/Resumes

- Homework:
 - Listen [Finding Fred, “The Genius of Empathy”](#) (Season 1, Ep 1 from October 22, 2019)
 - Watch “[The Power of Vulnerability](#)”
 - [UC Personal Statements](#) & [Statements of Purpose](#)

Reflection #1 due Friday 1/12 by 11:59pm

Week 2- Representation and Power

1/15-1/19

Monday: MLK Jr. Holiday, no class

- Homework:
 - See Friday week 1

Reflection #2 due Tuesday 1/16 by 11:59pm

Wednesday: Vulnerability and Empathy

- Homework:
 - Read Emily McCrary-Ruiz-Esparza, [Generation Amazing!!! How We're Draining Language of Its Power](#) (2022)
 - Read "[Yes, It *Is* About Disability: Reflections on Disability and Media Criticism After Sundance 2020](#)" by Laura Dorwart
 - *Optional:* Watch [Crip Camp](#)

Friday: Representation and Meaning

- Homework:
 - Abdellah Taia, "[Oum Zahra Goes to the Movies,](#)" *Another Morocco* (2017)
 - Listen: "[\(Ep 18\) Pt. 9-Under the Blacklight: Narrating the Nightmare and \(Re\)Imagining the Possible](#)"
 - "[She Coined the Term 'Intersectionality' Over 30 Years Ago. Here's What It Means to Her Today](#)" by Kimberlé Crenshaw

[Weekly Annotations & Reflections](#) #1 due Friday 1/19 by 11:59pm

Week 3- Claiming Space

1/22-1/26

Monday: Who is Listening?

- Homework:
 - Read "[The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action](#)" by Audre Lorde
 - Read selections from [Hunger](#) by Roxane Gay

Draft 1 of your Personal essay due before class, Wednesday 1/24

Wednesday: Who is Talking Back?

- Homework:
 - Watch *Nanette* (Netflix)

Friday: Claiming Space

- Homework:
 - Read Gloria Anzaldúa "[Speaking in Tongues](#)"
 - Keep revising personal essay

Week 4- Beginning to theorize form

1/29-2/2

[Weekly Annotations and Reflections](#) #2 due Monday 1/29 by 11:59pm

Monday: Storytelling and Identity

- Homework:
 - Read Vauhini Vara, [Ghosts](#) (2021)

Wednesday: How to revise

- Homework:
 - Keep Revising Personal Essay

Friday: How to edit

- Homework:
 - Finish revising personal essay and submit to Canvas by midnight

Personal Essay Final Draft due Friday 2/2 by 11:59pm

Week 5- Using forms

2/5-2/9

[Weekly Annotations and Reflections](#) #3 due Monday 2/5 by 11:59pm

Monday: Personal Essay In-class reflection and introducing medium, "[The Medium is the Message](#)" (Video)

- Homework:
 - Read "[Redesigning Blatantly Racist Brands is Not Enough](#)" by Debbie Millman

Wednesday: Introduction to the Course

- Homework:
 - Read "[The Pornography of Genre, or the Genre of Pornography](#)" by Neil Gaiman

Friday: Introduction to the Course

- Homework:
 - Review: Gilbert, "[Curiosity and Devotion to Inquisitiveness](#)"

Week 6- Storytelling

2/12-2/16

[Weekly Annotations and Reflections](#) #4 due Monday 2/12 by 11:59pm

Monday: What is your story?

- Homework:
 - Read "[How to Tell a Dragon Slaying Story](#)"

Wednesday: What do you want to talk about?

- Homework:
 - What is your ideal job? Look online and find three job postings you would be interested in applying for (whether or not you are qualified at this time—dream big!). Save the postings or print copies and bring in to next class.

Reflection #3 due Wednesday 2/14 by 11:59

Friday: Interview Workshop

- Homework:
 - Watch [“Examined Life”](#) (2008)

Week 7- Popular Culture

2/19-2/23

Monday: President’s day, no class

- Homework:
 - See Friday week 6

[Weekly Annotations and Reflections](#) #5 due Tuesday 2/20 by 11:59pm

Draft 1 of public performance due Wednesday 2/21, before the start of class

Wednesday: Presentation strategies and Peer Review

- Homework:
 - N/A

Friday: Continue Peer Review

- Homework:
 - [“On White Queer Fandom and the Erasure of Fans of Color”](#) by Stitch
 - Read [“Not Here to Make Friends”](#) by Roxane Gay

Week 8- Presentation strategies and examples

2/26-3/1

[Weekly Annotations and Reflections](#) #6 due Monday 2/26 by 11:59pm

Monday: Annotated Bibliographies

- Homework:
 - Watch Selected clips from *Last Week Tonight* with John Oliver:
 - [Octopuses](#)
 - [Cereal](#)
 - [Pennies](#)

Wednesday: Integrating sources and Presentation Styles

- Homework:
 - Keep revising Presentation

Friday: Honing your visuals

- Homework:
 - Keep revising Presentation

Week 9- Presentations continued

3/4-3/8

Draft 2 of public performance due Monday, 3/4, before the start of class for peer review

Monday: Peer review, Practicing delivery

- Homework:
 - Practice your presentations

Wednesday: Putting it all together

- Homework:
 - Practice your presentations
 - Please be ready to support your peers in their presentations!

Friday: Presentations

- Homework:
 - Practice your presentations

[Weekly Annotations and Reflections](#) #7 due Friday 3/8 by 11:59pm–For this reflection use any source you had not previously written about.

Week 10- Re-Defining Public Rhetoric

3/11-3/15

Monday: Presentations

- Homework:
 - Practice your presentations

Wednesday: Presentations

- Homework:
 - Practice your presentations:

Friday: Presentations

- Homework:
 - Finish reflection

Final Reflection due 3/19 by 3:00pm via Canvas