

CAT 125

Winter 2024 // 4 Units

Maya VanderSchuit, mavander@ucsd.edu, Office Hours: T/TH 11-12pm on [Zoom](#),
Monday 10-11am, or by appointment.

Section Number:	Day :	Time:	Location:
305616	T/TH	8:00- 9:20	TBD Zoom first week
305621	T/TH	9:30-10:50	TBD Zoom first week
305628	T/TH	12:30-1:50	TBD Zoom first week

COURSE DESCRIPTION

[CAT 125](#) and [CAT 125R](#) courses (four units, every quarter) are 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; only one of these two courses must be taken to fulfill the upper-division writing requirement. Students must have completed the lower-division writing sequence—CAT 1, CAT 2, and CAT 3—in order to enroll in CAT 125 or CAT 125R.

Weeks 1-5: 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 6-10: 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.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CAT 125 students work towards these goals:

- Practice reflective strategies for reading, watching, listening, and writing.
- Develop proficiency in public presentation, documentation, and curation.
- Examine authority as a writer and how authority in authorship works in terms of race, gender, and sexuality.
- Understand and employ various rhetorical strategies appropriately.
- Clearly direct written, spoken, and digital compositions to multiple and diverse audiences.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Netflix subscription, weeks 3-6 (you only need one month for this class)
- Access to Canvas & Course Reserves
- Notebook & Writing Utensil
- Recommended: *They Say, I Say CAT Edition*
- *NOTE: You may be asked to bring your laptop to certain sessions*

COURSE POLICIES

STATEMENT OF INCLUSION:

I believe very strongly that the classroom is a place to expand our knowledge and experiences safely, while being respected and valued. I support the values of UC San Diego to “create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus in which students, faculty, and staff can thrive”. I strive to uphold the values articulated by the Office of the [Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#): “We believe that true excellence is achieved through productive relationships among people of diverse perspectives. When the collective talents of our students, faculty, and staff at UC San Diego are united in an environment that is open and inclusive, creativity and innovation prosper.” I hope you will join me in creating a class that upholds these values to further enhance our learning as a community.

For more information,

https://commons.ucsd.edu/_files/Inclusion-Statements-Handout-4.pdf. And <http://diversity.ucsd.edu>.

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Our classroom will be inclusive and compassionate. Please see UCSD’S policies [here](#).

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations must be approved for services by providing appropriate and recent documentation to the [Office of](#)

Disabilities. Students authorized by OSD to receive reasonable accommodations should meet with me during my office hours during the *first two weeks of class* in order to ensure confidentiality. *We can discuss your specific accommodations and brainstorm ideas of how I can best help you succeed in this course.*

ACADEMIC HONESTY

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.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance and class participation is *essential* and *mandatory* to your success in this course. Please arrive on time and ready to participate in the classroom community. If you must miss class, please come and talk to me during office hours or email me to discuss the circumstances. It is *your responsibility to check in with your fellow students* to see what you may have missed and/ or meet with me in office hours. I will **not** be able to detail what we covered in class via email.

You are allowed 1 week (2 for T/Th and 3 for MWF) unexcused absences. For every absence after 3, you will lose 1/3 a letter grade of your overall grade. After 8 absences, you may fail the course.

NOTE: Per University guidance, attendance to synchronously held lectures or discussions cannot be used in calculating your grade in the event a course moves remote.

TARDINESS

Tardiness is disruptive to the classroom environment and will adversely affect your grade. Three tardies are equivalent to one absence. New note (10/27/23): If you arrive at, or past, the class halfway point you will be marked absent.

PARTICIPATION

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.

Showing up to the section is a small portion of what counts as participation. You must earn your participation grade through various forms of engagement with the course. Such forms include, but are not limited to:

- Actively engaging in section discussion and online communication
- Completing readings and Weekly Annotations
- Turning in “In class assignments” to Canvas
- Working respectfully with others
- Coming to section ON TIME
- Putting away distractions (no cell phones!)
- Attending office hours

A – You are well prepared for lecture and section, demonstrated by: having all your materials; consistently contributing to discussion; asking productive questions; listening actively and taking notes; engaging in group work; supporting and respecting other students; respecting TAs, the instructor and course material; attending office hours; coming to lecture and section on time and staying for the entire class time; taking responsibility for any work or material missed if absent; overall proactive and attentive.

B – You are somewhat prepared for lecture and section, demonstrated by: occasionally contributing to discussion; listening actively; engaging in group work; respecting other students; respecting TAs, the instructor, and course material; mostly coming to lecture and section on time and staying for the entire class time; overall responsible.

C – You are inconsistently prepared for lecture and section, demonstrated by: rarely contributing to discussion; missing materials; managing time poorly; working well with others, but unable to contribute fairly; respecting TAs, instructor, and course materials; mostly coming to lecture and section on time and staying for the entire class time; overall, inconsistent.

D – You are physically present but mentally disengaged from the course, demonstrated by: never contributing to discussion in lecture or section; consistently coming to class late or leaving early; working well with others, but unable to contribute fairly; failing to develop any relationships with TAs and/or instructor; overall, disengaged.

0 – You demonstrate through behavior and/or language that you are uninterested in learning; or, alternatively, you are regularly disrespectful of other students, TAs, the instructor, or course material.

LAPTOP AND PHONE POLICY

Personal electronic devices are not allowed in this class (unless prompted to use them). Screen engagement negatively affects the classroom culture/community and is distracting to both myself and your peers. Your participation grade in this course will be significantly impacted each time you are seen using a screen device in class.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION AND LATE WORK

All major assignments require you to submit a rough draft before the final due date. While the draft does not count towards your grade, failure to submit a draft will result in the loss of a letter grade on the final submission.

In order to receive a letter grade, all assignments must be submitted through Canvas. For each day work is late, your grade goes down by $\frac{1}{3}$ letter. If the assignment is more than a week late, you will receive a 0.

GRADING CRITERIA

Your major projects and presentations will be graded on a letter scale. **Assignments must be turned in on time.** Please let me know at least a week in advance of the due date if you need an extension for valid reasons. Retroactive extensions WILL NOT be issued. *For each day work is late, your grade goes down by $\frac{1}{3}$ letter. If the assignment is more than a week late, you will receive a 0.*

An “A” represents extraordinary work that has been thoroughly developed and considered, a “B” represents great work that fulfills all requirements of the prompt but leaves room for more development and consideration. A “C” is considered to be the “average” and reflects the completion of an assignment that fulfills the prompts requirements, but does not show a great amount of effort to hone your skills from class, it also shows a lack of evolution from initial idea to final project. A “D” represents an insufficient effort in the completion of the assignment, meaning some components are missing or are not turned in on time. An “F” represents disregard for deadlines, assignment instructions, and displays a minimal effort for completing an assignment. In order to receive a grade, all work must be your own.

NOTE: Discussions about grades are more productive in person than over email. If you have a question or concern about your grade, please meet with me during office hours

or set up an appointment. I am happy to discuss why you received this grade and how you can improve it in the future.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Quick note: All assignments must be original work created for this class and should ascribe to UCSD's policy of academic integrity.

- [Personal Narrative](#) -- 25%
- [Public Performance 101](#) -- 30%
- [Final Reflection](#) -- 15% (Complete/Incomplete)
- [Participation](#) -- 10%
- [Reflective Journals + Weekly Annotations](#)-- 20% (Complete/Incomplete)

Reflective Journal assignments will provide space for you to reflect on what you are interested in (in life, in career, etc.); imagine the possibilities attached to those ideas; and to reflect on the discussions we have in class and the media we consume. **Entries should be 250-400 words each** and prompts are below in the syllabus. These are graded complete/incomplete. One of these includes a [Resume/CV](#) assignment.

Extra Credit: if 90% or more of your section fills out the CAPES, then the whole section receives extra credit on 1 assignment (instructors choice).

COURSE CALENDAR

WHAT IS DUE & WHEN?

All screenings, readings, and reflections should be done **before** you arrive at class on the due date. Unless otherwise stated in the course calendar, the listed readings (and other misc content) will be due on *Tuesday* and the written reflections (or prompts in a box) will be due on *Thursday*.

Week 1 (1/8/2024): Introduction to 125

Introduction, Syllabus and Canvas Overview

Topics: Personal Narrative, Storytelling, Power & Permission

DUE THURSDAY:

Read:

- Ocean Vuong, "[Someday I'll Love Ocean Vuong](#)" [PDF Here](#)
- Gilbert, "[Curiosity and Devotion to Inquisitiveness](#)" Non-highlighted [version here](#)

Watch:

- "[The Power of Vulnerability](#)"

OPTIONAL: Rene Gladman "[Untitled Environments](#)" (downloadable PDF option on website)

DUE FRIDAY at Midnight Reflection #1: CV/Resume with 100 word reflection.

Upload your final CV or Resume to Canvas with your 100 word reflection. 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.

PROMPT HERE: [Resume/CV](#)

Week 2 (1/15/2024): Stories & Power

Reflection #2 DUE **WEDNESDAYby 11:59pm (midnight) –Personal Narrative**

Proposal: 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)

DUE TUESDAY

Read & Listen

- Emily McCrary-Ruiz-Esparza, [Generation Amazing!!! How We're Draining Language of Its Power](#) (2022) PDF [here](#)
- Paige Sarlin, [The Irresistible Rise of Story: Documentary Film](#) (PDF download option on site) ***important for Thursday's class
- Abdellah Taia, ["Oum Zahra Goes to the Movies."](#) *Another Morocco* (2017)

OPTIONAL: Noor Hindi's [Against Erasure](#)

DUE THURSDAY (midnight): Weekly Annotations on the readings from this week (Annotation #1)

Week 3 (1/22/2024) : Laughter, Joy, and Pain

Key term: emotional appeal

DUE WEDNESDAY (NEW DEADLINE/EXTENSION FOR WINTER 2024) at MIDNIGHT Personal Essay Draft #1 be ready for Peer Review in Class on Thursday (See Canvas for Worksheet)

DUE TUESDAY

Watch:

- *Nanette* (Netflix)
- OPTIONAL: [Hannah Gadsby Ten Steps](#) to *Nanette* (If you don't have netflix, read this and look up youtube excerpts of the comedy routine)

DUE THURSDAY

Read:

- Roxanne Gay, "[Some Jokes are Funnier Than Others](#)" [PDF here](#)
- Audre Lorde, "[The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action](#)"

DUE THURSDAY (midnight) [Weekly Annotations & Reflections](#) (Annotation #2)

Week 4 (1/29/2024): Organizing Silences & Creating Space

DUE TUESDAY

Read:

- Vauhini Vara, [Ghosts](#) (2021)
- Gloria Anzaldúa "[Speaking in Tongues](#)" (see optional readings for more by this author + contextual introduction)
- [UC Personal Statements & Statements of Purpose](#)
- OPTIONAL: [Joseph Azam, "Last, First, Middle"](#) Gloria Anzaldúa [How to Tame a Wild Tongue](#)

DUE THURSDAY [Weekly Annotations & Reflections](#) (Annotation #3)

DUE FRIDAY: Personal Essay Final Draft at 11:59pm

Week 5 (2/5/2024) : Telling a Story: Fashion

DUE TUESDAY

Read:

- Marita Golden, [My Black Hair: a Tangled Story of Race and Politics in America](#) (2015) PDF [here](#)
- Oscar-winning short film [Hair Love](#) (2019)
- Nadra Kareem Nittle, [A Guide to Understanding and Avoiding Cultural Appropriation](#) (2021) PDF [here](#)
- Minh-Ha T. Pham, [Fashion's Cultural Appropriation Debate: Pointless](#) (2014) PDF [here](#)
- OPTIONAL: Jenn Shapland, [A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Make Money From Again](#) — this text talks about the "form" of gendered clothing, as well as her regrettable urge to turn hobbies into a money-making endeavor.

DUE THURSDAY: [Weekly Annotations & Reflections](#) (Annotation #4)

Week 6 (2/12/2024): On Curiosity & Asking Questions

Key term: logical appeals

DUE TUESDAY:

Read:

- [“The Medium is the Message”](#) (Video)
- Review: Gilbert, [“Curiosity and Devotion to Inquisitiveness”](#)
- OPTIONAL: [The Medium is The Message](#) Marshall McLuhan + Quintin Fiore

Listen

- [Less is More Hidden Brain Podcast](#)

DUE THURSDAY: [Weekly Annotations & Reflections](#) (Annotation #5)

DUE FRIDAY Reflection #3: 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 7 (2/19/2024): Turning Out: Questions & Researching Answers (Example about Food)

DUE TUESDAY

Read:

- [Crying in H Mart](#) (Michelle Zauner) (added to syllabus 10.12.23) PDF [here](#)
- Chantha Nguon & Kim Green, [“The Gradual Extinction of Softness”](#) (2021) PDF [here](#)
- [“Fried Chicken is Common Ground”](#) (Osayi Endolyn) [PDF here](#)

DUE THURSDAY: [Weekly Annotations & Reflections](#) (on last week’s readings) (Annotation #6)

DUE FRIDAY at 11:59pm: Outline for Public Performance (Reflection 4)

Week 8 (2/26/2024): Talking About Your Stuff

DUE TUESDAY

Listen:

- [“1619, “The Birth of American Music.” \(Episode 3\)](#)

- [“How to Save a Planet, “Black Lives Matter & the Climate”](#)

Read:

- Tom Chiarella, [“The Invisible Grip” PDF](#) & [“How to Tell a Dragon Slaying Story” PDF](#)

DUE THURSDAY: Weekly Annotations & Reflections (Annotation #7)

DUE IN SECTION TUESDAY: Public Performance (Rough Draft) ([Peer Review Directions](#))

ROUGH DRAFT = Script and some slides (as a PDF)

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

Week 9 (3/4/2024): The Internet & Digital Decluttering

Note: In 125 courses, speeches will happen in person and be performed in class during Week 9-10. You will be assigned a presentation date. See below.

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”](#)
- **NO ANNOTATIONS THIS WEEK**

DUE TUESDAY: You will perform in class during Weeks 9-10– The date will be assigned to you. ALL PRESENTATIONS DUE FOR THE FIRST CLASS OF WEEK 9.

Week 10 (3/11/2024): On Reflection

Recommended: [“The Danger of Fake Positivity & Spiritual Bypassing”](#)

No required reading! Just writing, reflecting, & watching each other’s videos/performances.

DUE FRIDAY [Final Reflection at 11:59am](#) NO LATE WORK ACCEPTED ON THIS ASSIGNMENT

Recommended Readings & Screenings that related to the course topics:

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!