



# To Infinity & Beyond: Media Narratives of Earth & Outer Space

MWF 10-10:50am  
Mosaic 114

MWF 11-11:50am  
Center 101

Dr. Phoebe Bronstein

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Office Hours: Monday @ 12pm at my office (Catalyst 162)

Wednesday @ 9am at My Office (Catalyst 162)

From *The Jetsons* (1962-1987) to *David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet* (2020), this CAT 2 class explores mass media and popular culture narratives that center and intertwine earth and outer space—how is planet earth (our home) narrated in popular media? How is outer space/space exploration? How do these conversions frame, represent, and engage conversations about environmental protection, stewardship, and climate change? How do these stories narrate humans, technology, and the environment here on earth? The first part of the class will focus on narratives of planet earth in both past and contemporary media, with particular attention to how these stories intersect and engage with the race, gender, place, and the climate crisis. The second half of the class will look at narratives of space travel and exploration (starting with the space race) in TV shows and films like *The Martian*, asking how both past and present investment in space travel inform and engage narratives about our environment, the planet, and our places here.

## **Learning Objectives**

*Building off what you learned in CAT 1,*

- Practice clear prose that advances the rhetorical purpose & choose a tone that is appropriate to the subject and audience.
- Craft and organize a compelling argument and support it with relevant and carefully-evaluated evidence.
- Synthesize a variety of sources and points of view on a single topic (i.e. in service of an argument)

- Practice proper citation and documentation of sources, including in multimodal assignments.
- Develop your own writing voice, using revision to hone your argument and reflect on your own writing practice.

### **Core Concepts:**

- Discourse Communities
- Parts of an argument (Part II)
- Kinds of questions
- Genre & Medium/Mode
- Discipline & Interdisciplinarity
- Form & Content

### **Core Writing Skills Fostered:**

- Thesis Statement
- Recognize & Deploy Parts of an argument (Part II)
- Synthesis of Differing viewpoints
- The ability to compare/contrast
- Perform Analysis
- Perform Revision

For all general **CAT policies and specific CAT 2 attendance policies**, click the following link:

[☰ CAT 2\\_Winter 2024\\_Course & Program Policies](#)

**Assignments** [☰ CAT 2 Assignment Overview\\_Winter 2024](#)

### **Course Calendar**

1. Course calendar subject to change. I will never add readings or screenings, but may swap things out as we go. Please make sure you refresh this doc before starting in on the weekly tasks.
2. We will likely go outside, possibly take walks during this course. Please let me know ASAP if this won't work for you.
3. All the screenings in the course are available on course reserves, via Canvas. (Login with active directory info).
4. Readings are linked below as PDFs or html links or are from *They Say, I Say CAT Edition* (TSIS).
5. *Please note that many of the films and TV shows we watch will contain violence and sex and representations of racism. We will also discuss some disturbing topics. Please review the syllabus during Weeks 1 and 2 to make sure this is the right course for you.*
6. *Most Wednesdays and/or Fridays we will do weekly free writes, which you will turn in. These will be based on the prompts from class.*

<u>Week</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Writing Due by 11:59 pm Friday</u>
<p><b>Week 1: Here On Earth, Out there In Space ...</b></p> <p><b>Key Terms:</b> Genre &amp; Medium/Mode; Discipline &amp; Interdisciplinarity &amp; Ideology</p>	<p>Class Intro, Overview</p> <p>Watch (Recommended): <i>Hunt for the Wilderpeople</i> (2017)</p> <p>Recommended: <i>TSIS</i>, “Academic writing doesn’t mean you can’t use your own voice”</p>	<p>Read: <a href="#">Hua Hsu, “Stuart Hall &amp; the rise of Cultural Studies”</a></p> <p>Recommended: <a href="#">“How to Mark a book”</a></p> <p>Due: Annotations #1</p>	<p>Watch: <a href="#">Walter Benjamin, “Work of Art”</a></p> <p>Due: Annotations #2</p> <p>Recommended: <a href="#">W.E.B DuBois, “The Comet”</a></p>	<p><b>Reflection #1:</b> See Canvas</p>
<p><b>Week 2: The Beautiful Planet</b></p> <p><b>Key Terms:</b> Form &amp; Content &amp; Kinds of Questions</p>	<p>MLK Day/No Class</p>	<p>Read: Read: <a href="#">William Cronnon, “What is Wilderness?”</a> &amp; <a href="#">Robin Kimmerer, “Origins”</a></p> <p>Review Paper #1 Prompt</p> <p>Due: Annotations #3</p> <p>(Note to PB: <i>Into the Woods</i>)</p>	<p>Watch: <a href="#">“Forests”</a></p> <p>Read: <a href="#">“How Much Can Forests Fight Climate Change”</a> &amp; <a href="#">“Principles of Environmental Justice”</a></p> <p>Due: Annotations #4 (Principles of EJ)</p> <p>Recommended: <a href="#">Mise en Scene &amp; Cinematography</a> &amp; Ch. 4 “Three ways to respond”</p>	<p><b>Paper #1 Proposal (Sequence Analysis)</b> Due--What will you focus your paper on? Which prompt? Which show? Any particular sequence?</p>
<p><b>Week 3: American Dreams– Horror, Preppers, &amp; the</b></p>	<p>Read: Ta-Nahesi Coates, “The Case for Reparations” (course reserves)</p>	<p>Watch: <i>Get Out</i> (2017)</p>	<p>Watch: <i>The Last of Us</i>, “Long Long Time” (Ep 3, 2023)</p>	<p><b>Paper #1 Draft Due</b></p>

<p><b>Suburbs</b></p>	<p><u>Due:</u> Annotations #5</p>	<p>Due: Paper #1 Shot List Due</p>		
<p><b>Week 4: Planetary Destruction &amp; Narrative Problems</b></p> <p>Key Terms: Parts of an argument &amp; Discourse Community</p>	<p><u>Read:</u> Rob Nixon, <i>Slow Violence</i> “<a href="#">Introduction</a>” (at least to pg. 30)</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Annotations #6</p>	<p>Listen: “<a href="#">This Song is Composed from 133 Years of Climate Change Data</a>” &amp; <a href="#">Yo-Yo Ma, Quinn Christopherson and Pattie Gonia's new climate change song</a></p>	<p>Watch: <i>The Day After Tomorrow</i> (2004) OR TBD</p> <p>Read: <i>TSIS</i> Ch. 8 “Connecting the parts”</p>	<p><b>Revision Check in:</b></p> <p>Go to your TA or Dr. Bronstein’s office hours in Weeks 4 &amp; 5 to talk about what you are working on. Come with a question/problem /something to look at.</p>
<p><b>Week 5: Not So Natural Disaster</b></p>	<p><u>Read:</u> Rachel Carson, “<a href="#">Silent Spring, Part I</a>” &amp; “<a href="#">Bombs &amp; the Bikini Atoll</a>”</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Annotations #7</p> <p><u>Recommended:</u> “<a href="#">Bending the Curve</a>” pgs 3-23</p>	<p><u>Watch:</u> <i>Godzilla</i> (1954)</p> <p>Read: “<a href="#">The Newest Godzilla, etc.</a>” NYT</p> <p>(Note to PB: Clips from <i>Chernobyl</i>)</p>	<p>Watch <i>The Host</i> (2006)</p> <p>Recommended: “<a href="#">Que Viva El Barrio</a>”</p>	<p><b>Paper #1 Final Draft Due</b></p>
<p><b>Week 6: Escape to Space</b></p>	<p>Lynn Spigel, “<a href="#">White Flight</a>” &amp; “<a href="#">How NASA Sold the Glamour of Space</a>”</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Annotations #8</p>	<p>Watch: <i>The Jetsons</i> (Pilot) &amp; <i>A Trip to the Moon</i></p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> Ch. 5 “Distinguishing what you say from what they say”</p>	<p>Read: “<a href="#">A Guide to the James Webb Telescope</a>” &amp; “<a href="#">Messages to and from Outer space</a>”</p>	<p><b>Paper #2 Proposal Due</b></p>
<p><b>Week 7: Writing Workshops</b></p>	<p>No Class/President’s Day</p>	<p><a href="#">Writing Workshops</a> All Week–No Lecture/No Discussion</p>	<p>Writing Workshops All Week–No Lecture/No Discussion</p>	

		<b>Paper #2 ROUGH DRAFT DUE 8am</b>		
<b>Week 8: What is left behind ...</b>  (writing workshops may continue into this week)	Read: <a href="#">Kim Stanley Robinson, "There is no Planet B"</a>  <u>Due:</u> Annotations #9	Watch: <i>Wall-e</i> (2008)	Recommended: <i>Elysium</i> (2013)	<b>Reflection Due:</b> What did you get out of your writing circle this week? How did the conversations shape your ideas for revision?
<b>Week 9: The Space Cowboy &amp; His Farm</b>	Watch: <i>Armageddon</i> (1998)  <u>Due:</u> Annotation #10	Watch: <i>The Martian</i> (2015)	Read: " <a href="#">Lost Space Tomato</a> "  Recommended: <i>Gravity</i> (2013)	<b>Paper #2 Final Draft Due</b>
<b>Week 10: It's the End of the World as We Know It ...</b>	Read: Tara Houska, " <a href="#">What Listening Means in the time of Climate Crisis?</a> "  <u>Watch (in class):</u> " <a href="#">Rise</a> "  <u>Due:</u> Annotation #11  <u>Recommended:</u> Mike Davis, " <a href="#">The Cast for Letting Malibu Burn</a> "	<b><u>Watch:</u></b> <i>Weathering with You</i> (2019)	<b><u>No Class/Extra Office Hours</u></b>	<b>Portfolio Due</b>

**Recommended:**

- ["Space Billionaires Should Spend More Time Thinking about Sex"](#)
- [Ursula Heise, "Narrative in the World Risk Society"?](#)
- ["America is Getting Lonelier"](#)
- [Climate & Groundwater Crisis \(NYT\)](#)
- Sophie Chao, "[The Plantation](#)"
- Robin Kimmerer, "[The Three Sisters](#)"

- [The Great Salt Lake Dries Up & Air Pollution \(NYT\)](#)
- [“BP Oil, Mexico, and Carbon Offsets”](#)