

CAT 125
Making Stories Visible: Materiality and Form

Fall 2024 // 4 Units

Maya VanderSchuit, mavander@ucsd.edu, Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 12:40-1:40,
Monday 1-2pm on [Zoom](#) or in the [Sixth College Admin office in Catalyst](#), or by
appointment.

Section Number:	Day :	Time:	Location:
526439	T/TH	9:30-10:50	York 3070
526434	T/TH	11:00- 12:20	York 3070
526436	T/TH	2:00-3:20	HSS 2305A

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. 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.

In this public rhetoric and practical communication course, we will use a variety of media narratives and art to explore how we make visible our personal, professional, and political stories. The media and art we'll engage with, from Rae Tajiri's documentary *History and Memory* to Gloria Andalu'a's writings to Fred Wilson's object assemblages, will situate personal stories, research, and expertise within broader histories and geopolitics, by exploring their materiality and form as rhetorical strategies. The works we read, or look at, will invite you to discuss different topics and rhetorical devices and how to utilize similar strategies in your own self-presentation.

The course will be part discussion and part writing workshop, driving towards helping you think through your future plans from graduation to life after college, from graduate school to getting a job you want/like. Part of this will entail using reflective strategies for reading, watching, and listening rhetorically, i.e. being mindful of contexts, messages, and audiences.

You will also practice several modes of rhetorical speaking and writing, making decisions about content and structure to inform, persuade, or tell a story, and ultimately support you as you hone your voice and style. Exercises and assignments are loosely structured so as to allow you to compose texts that will support your present and/or

future-life hopes and goals, while highlighting different stages of the writing process, from pre-writing and drafting to peer review and collaborative revision.

Weeks 1-5: The first half of this course asks you to turn inward and the authors we read, media we watch, and art we look at will demonstrate ways to do this, particularly incorporating personal experience and memoir into broader political conversations. These works 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

- 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 and 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 everything we covered in class in detail via email. Additionally, it is your

responsibility to keep track of your absences and tardies. While I keep track of this for my personal records, I will not share the details of this information upon each request.

You are allowed 1 week (2 for T/Th and 3 for MWF) unexcused absences. For every absence after 2, 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. Four tardies are equivalent to one absence. If you arrive at, or past, the 20 min mark you will be marked absent. *Email me the same day you are late!* This way I can change your attendance to “late” instead of “absent.”

If you have special circumstances, such as a far commute between classrooms, please talk with me. Following our discussion, send a post-conversation email describing what we discussed.

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

You can find detailed descriptions about Participation grades (A-F) [HERE](#).

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. **** NOTE: The exception to this rule is the Weekly Annotation Assignment. This MUST be turned in on time to receive full credit.**

TIPS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS:

- 1) *Check the Syllabus:* The syllabus displays all assignments, due dates, and readings. I suggest creating a digital “bookmark” with the syllabus so it can be easily accessed. Do not rely on Canvas. I try to create due dates in the Canvas calendar, but this is not always possible. I suggest regularly referring back to the syllabus for policies on attendance, late work, information about assignments, hyperlinks for assignment prompts, and so forth.
- 2) *Buddy System:* Additionally, I highly encourage you to exchange email with at least one other student in the class. The buddy system will come in handy if you miss a class and need to be filled in. This also allows you to actively go over questions as they arise, discuss assignment materials and expectations, provide outside peer review or feedback, and so forth. Lastly, maybe you will make a new friend!

- 3) *Office Hours*: Attend office hours! I am here to help you brainstorm an idea, clarify an assignment, provide additional feedback on a recent assignment, etc. You can consider these “Student Hours.” They’re for you!

TRIGGER WARNING

Some syllabus and course content may contain violence, sex, nudity, strong language and/or content that may be disturbing to some students. If you find something on the syllabus that is triggering, please let me know. We can brainstorm alternate texts, etc., together in office hours.

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 1/3 letter. If the assignment is more than a week late, you will receive a 0. *** NOTE: The exception to this rule is the Weekly Annotation Assignment. This MUST be turned in on time to receive full credit.*

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:

Absences: You will have the opportunity to make up one unexcused absence in this course by attending an Artist Talk/Lecture and writing a 250 word reflection. Any Artist Talk/Lecture occurring outside of the UCSD Visual Arts Department, or Mandeville Arts, must be pre-approved by the instructor.

Evaluations: If 90% or more of your section fills out the Course Evaluations (SET), 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 weekly annotations will be due on *Thursday*.

Week 0 (9/26/2024):

Making Stories Visible: Materiality and Form

Introduction, Syllabus and Canvas Overview

Read/ Listen:

- Broken Boxes Podcast: [Invisible Stories Conversation](#) with Tanya Aguiniga
- Monika Wagner, [Material](#)

Week 1 (9/30/2024): Introduction to 125

Diasporic Memory

Key Terms: Materiality, Diaspora

DUE TUESDAY:

Read:

- Ocean Vuong, "[Someday I'll Love Ocean Vuong](#)" [PDF](#)
- Ocean Vuong "[When I write, I feel larger than the limits of my body](#)" from Louisiana Channel
- Dan Voh [Take My Breath Away](#) (read and watch quick video at the end)

DUE THURSDAY:

Read:

- Gilbert, "[Curiosity and Devotion to Inquisitiveness](#)" Non-highlighted [version here](#)

DUE FRIDAY at 11:59pm: Reflection #1: Resume / CV with a 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.

Week 2 (10/7/2024):

Personal Narrative: Food, Loss, Grief

Key term: emotional appeal, proust effect

DUE TUESDAY

Read:

- Chantha Nguon & Kim Green, "[The Gradual Extinction of Softness](#)" (2021) PDF [here](#)
- [Crying in H Mart](#) (Michelle Zauner) PDF [here](#)

DUE WEDNESDAY at 11:59pm: Reflection #2 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 THURSDAY

- Rebecca Solnit, [Apricots](#)

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

Week 3 (10/14/2024):

Writing about the Self(s): Borderlands, Liminality

Key Term: Positionality

DUE TUESDAY

Read:

- [UC Personal Statements](#) & [Statements of Purpose](#)
- Gloria Anzaldúa "[Speaking in Tongues](#)" ([better PDF here](#))
- Gloria Anzaldúa [How to Tame a Wild Tongue](#)

DUE WED at 11:59pm: [Personal Narrative Essay Draft #1](#) be ready for Peer Review in Class on Thursday (See Canvas for Worksheet)

DUE THURSDAY

Read:

- Tanya Aguiniga [Art 21 Video Interview](#) (17min)
- Emily McCrary-Ruiz-Esparza, [Generation Amazing!!! How We're Draining Language of Its Power](#) (2022)

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

Week 4 (10/21/2024):

Mining the Museum: Organizing Silences, Revealing Blind Spots

Key words: institutional critique

DUE TUESDAY

Read:

- Audre Lorde, ["The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action"](#)
- Fred Wilson [SFMOMA Museum Interventions](#) (3min video) and Frankel [Exhibition Review](#)

DUE THURSDAY

- Simone Leigh, Hirshorn.com [\(read text and watch the two short videos at the end\)](#); Optional: Invisible Labor: Hidden Work in the Contemporary World [Exposing Invisible Labor](#)

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

DUE FRIDAY at 11:59pm: [Personal Narrative Final Draft](#)

Week 5 (10/28/2024):

Performative Gestures: The Body, Fashion, Feminisms

Key terms: Protest Fashion, Guerrilla Art, Performance Art

DUE TUESDAY

Read:

- Tanisha C. Ford, "Dashiki" chapter 1 of [Dressed in Dreams](#)
- Nicole Doerr [Fashion in Social Movements](#) (skim read for main concepts & ideas)

DUE THURSDAY:

- Guerrilla Girls, ART21 [Interview](#) (16 minutes)
- Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* (TBD watch in class)
- [Weekly Annotations & Reflections](#) (Annotation #4)

Week 6 (11/4/2024): Medium is The Message: AI collaborations, PowerPoint, Digital Media

Key term: Logical Appeals

DUE TUESDAY:

Read:

- Vauhini Vara, [Ghosts](#) (2021)
- Shannon Mattern, [Using PowerPoint, Artists Ask How Performative Presentations Shape Our Thinking](#)

DUE WEDNESDAY at 11:59pm 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.

DUE THURSDAY:

- “[The Medium is the Message](#)” (Video)
- [Pipilotti Rist: Color is Dangerous](#); Louisiana Channel Youtube

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

Week 7 (11/11/2024):

The Archive: Personal, Cultural, Historical Histories

DUE TUESDAY

Read:

- Deborah A. Miranda, [Bad Indian](#) (read all three items in this folder)

DUE WEDNESDAY by 11:59pm Annotated Bibliography for Public Performance (Reflection 4) → 3 sources (1 must be academic!) on your topic due on Canvas.

DUE THURSDAY:

- Mercades Dorame, [Made in LA video](#) and [Getty Webpage](#)

- Post Commodity, [Going to Water](#), 2021, watch this [4 min video and read the description below](#)

Weekly Annotations & Reflections (Annotation #6)

DUE FRIDAY at 11:59pm: Outline for Public Performance (Reflection 5)

Week 8 (11/18/2024):

Talking About Your Stuff: Art as Alternative Activism

DUE TUESDAY

Watch

- [TED talk: Activism Needs Introverts](#) (On Craftivism)
- [Material Relations](#) Julia Bryan Wilson (author of [Fiber: Art, Textile Politics](#))

DUE WEDNESDAY at 11:59pm: [Public Performance Rough Draft](#) : Script and some slides (as a PDF) See Canvas Assignment for details.

DUE THURSDAY: [Weekly Annotations & Reflections \(Annotation #7\)](#)* for this annotation, you can use a transcript of the video/podcasts. As an alternative, you can select a text from the option reading list at the end of the syllabus or select a text from Week 9 and 10.**

Listen

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

Week 9 (11/25/ 2024):

Glitches, Algorithms, and Clouds: 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:

- [Your Memories, Their Cloud](#) Tim Robinson (You can sign up for access to the NY Times through the [UCSD Library Website](#).)
- Gert Lovink, [After the Social Media Hype: Dealing with Information Overload](#)
- Tim Kreider, ["The Busy Trap"](#)

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 (12/2/2024): On Reflection

No required reading!

DUE FRIDAY Final Reflection at 11:59am NO LATE WORK ACCEPTED ON THIS ASSIGNMENT

Optional Readings:

Week 1

Rene Gladman "[Untitled Environments](#)" (downloadable PDF option on website); [Finding Fred, "A Genius of Empathy"](#) (Ep 1); Angela Duckworth's [Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance](#)

Week 2

Marcel Proust [More than Cake](#); Noor Hindi's [Against Erasure](#) ; "[The Power of Vulnerability](#)" Brene Brown

Week 3

Tanya Aguiniga [PBS 3 min Video](#); Art 21 Video on [Post Commodity](#); Mingei International Museum: La Frontera [KPBS](#)

Week 4

Joseph Azam, "[Last, First, Middle](#)" ; Simone White, [bound together by this matter](#) (Poem with an Audio Track - Trigger warning: This is an intense poem that utilizes profanities) and [Of Being Dispersed](#); Fred Wilson's [Lecture at VA](#), Simone Leigh [NY Times](#)

Week 5

Paige Sarlin [The Irresistible Rise of Story: Documentary Film](#) (PDF download option on site); Guerilla Girls in [The Guardian](#) ; Charlotte Brunsdon, [Feminism, PostFeminism, Martha, Martha, and Nigella](#) (Just page 1-4); Martha Rosler's [Semiotics of The Kitchen](#); Jenn Shapland, [A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Make Money From Again](#) , Nadra Kareem Nittle, [A Guide to Understanding and Avoiding Cultural Appropriation](#) (2021) PDF [here](#) ; [Is Fashion Racist?](#), Tansy Hotkins: [How Fast-Fashion and Racism are Intricately Linked](#)

Week 6

[The Medium is The Massage](#) Marshall McLuhan + Quintin Fiore; Pipilotti Rist [Interview](#) from the Louisiana Museum, Kate Mondloch on [Pipilotti Rist page 43-48](#); Kate Mondloch's *Medium is The Eyeball Massage from Francois Bovier & Adeena Mey Exhibiting the Moving Image 74-93*

Week 7

Sherry Farrell Racette, [Making Stories \(Artist Statement\)](#); Robin Kimmerer, excerpt from [Braiding Sweetgrass](#); Carolyn Finney, *Bamboozled* from [White Spaces, Black Faces](#); Shea Wesley Martin [Wild, Fat, Queer, and Black](#)

Week 8

Julia Bryan Wilson, *Fray: Art + Textile Politics*: [Threads of Protest](#)

Week 9

[Touch Screen Theory: Digital Devices and Feeling](#); [How Do We Survive The Media Apocalypse](#); Kris Fallon, [The Pencil of Identity: Instagram as Inadvertent\(Female\) Autobiography](#)

Week 10

[“The Danger of Fake Positivity & Spiritual Bypassing”](#); Vilem Flusser, [to Touch](#) excerpt from *The Universe of Technical Images*; Allison Noelle Conner, [The Glitch Strikes Back](#) from *Contemporary Art Review LA*

Recommended Readings & Screenings that related to the course topics [LINKED HERE](#)