



What If?: Fearsome Futures and Possible Presents

CAT 3, Spring 2025

MOS 0113 M/W/F 10:00AM-10:50AM

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Marchisotto

Office: CT0159

Office Hours: M/W 1:00PM-2:00PM and by appointment

Email: jmarchis@ucsd.edu

Course Description

CAT 3 is a 6-unit course and the final course in Sixth's writing intensive sequence. While the topics of CAT 3 range, all invite students to imagine the intersection of culture, art, and technology in the future. The overarching purpose of CAT 3 is to build on those skills developed in CAT 2 (argumentative writing and critical analysis) and teach students how to create new knowledge through research and art/world making.

Course Topic

Imagination is subversive. Creators of speculative art have long used it to undermine power structures, providing alternative views of what our world could look like. This CAT 3 course will look at the ways creators use art to warn us of pending catastrophe or show us the possibility of a different present, directing our gaze to better understand contemporary experience by reflecting it in fantastic, fun, and sometimes horrifying ways. We will read, watch, and listen to texts that contemplate the ways ability, gender, race, and other elements of identity intersect with contemporary culture and the environment to say something about who we are and where we are going.

Course Objectives

Building off what you learned in CAT 1 & 2, by the end of CAT 3 you should be able to:

- Understand and practice effective research, including developing research questions and finding and evaluating appropriate sources.
- Use research to make an effective multimodal and/or creative argument towards a specific audience.
- Engage with cultural products, including art/popular culture, as the result of research but also as legitimate objects of research.
- Develop an independent research project: find and evaluate appropriate sources, and compose research genres, like annotated bibliographies and literature reviews, etc.) practice and revision.

- Develop independence in the composition process and effectively collaborate with peers in the process of research and development of a multimodal project.

Core Concepts:

By the end of CAT 3, you should be able to understand and define the following terms/ideas:

- Resistance/Revolution
- Interdisciplinarity
- Art as argument
- Research as a process

Core Writing Skills Fostered

- Intersectional approaches to research
- Writing with Research and developing your voice
- Respectful & Responsible Collaboration (Interpersonal Communication)
- Multimodal/creative composition

Required Texts/Technology

- *They Say, I Say* CAT Edition
- Access to Canvas

Course and Program 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.

Etiquette and Conduct

You are expected to approach your enrollment in this class with respect. This means that when in lecture or section, you will actively listen to whomever has the floor, and avoid behaviors that are a distraction to you and others. You and your classmates have the right to a rich education, which requires that the course instructor, TAs, and subject matter receive thoughtful attention. Any behavior or language that takes away from an instructor’s ability to teach effectively or a student’s ability to learn effectively may result in disciplinary action.

At times you may be asked to discuss issues that you find disagreeable or uncomfortable. You also may have to work with instructors, TAs, and/or other students whom you find difficult. Unless there is a

sincere threat to your well being or safety (in which case please alert your instructor immediately), we ask you to approach these challenges with maturity and resilience. How can you make the most of experiences that you find challenging or boring? How can you address specific problems in the classroom with compassion and thoughtfulness? How can you contribute to the most meaningful educational experience for yourself and your classmates? How can you respectfully raise objections and/or disagreements with your instructor?

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), your TA, 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.

CAT students are expected to comply with the [UCSD Principles of Community](#). Please find below additional information on respectful engagement as part of both in-person and remote classroom spaces.

- 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.
- If any student posts content to the course website that violates UCSD's Principles of Community, the post will be removed and your instructor will reach out to the author via email to discuss the issue.

My Responsibility to the Course:

- I will be prepared for lecture and invested in the material
- I will make lectures participatory and encourage active engagement as a part of daily work.
- 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 attend lectures and section on time, ready to participate
- You will take responsibility for your actions and feelings, especially as they manifest within the course
- You will do the work assigned, both readings and writings, to the best of your ability (even if what qualifies “best” changes)
- You will do your own work with your best effort (even if what qualifies “best” changes) (See [UCSD Policies on Academic Integrity](#))
- You will offer your fellow writers honest and engaged critique.
- You will speak respectfully to me or your TA if you have any problems with the assignments or teaching methods; you will give us 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)

Access and 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>

Assignment Submission and Late Work

- All written assignments must be submitted to Canvas, with the exception of some 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 $\frac{1}{3}$ of a letter grade for each day late including weekends. If the assignment is more than a week late, you will receive an F.
- For drafts of Major Assignments:
 - While drafts are assessed for completion and not given a letter grade, late submission of formal assignment drafts will affect the overall assessment grade as stated above.
 - Failure to submit a draft will result in an F for the assignment.
 - Late drafts will not receive comments from the instructor.

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.

- Revision is an essential part of the writing process and is the practice by which you will hone your skills as an author. Assignment revision should be approached holistically and draw on feedback from both peers and your TAs.
- 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 do reflections on your work throughout the term and a final reflective portfolio.

Participation and Attendance

Participation and attendance in lecture and discussions are very important. Lecture attendance ensures that you understand and can ask questions about the specificities of your topic. Discussion sections build community and provide a space to work through your ideas and engage with your peers. Work done during these times contributes to your overall participation grade as well as to your assignment grades.

If you must miss lecture or discussion, please contact your peers and teaching assistant about what you miss. I also recommend attending office hours to talk through any concepts went over in your absence.

CAT Program-Wide Attendance Policy:

- You are allowed 5 absences. For every subsequent absence you will lose $\frac{1}{3}$ a letter from your overall grade. We do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences.
- If you miss a total of two weeks, you are eligible to fail the course, regardless of numerical grade.
- If you are more than 10 minutes late or leave more than 10 minutes early it is considered a tardy. Two tardies equals one absence.

Please speak to your faculty or your TA if you have any concerns about your attendance in this course. If you are experiencing any symptoms (covid or otherwise), please reach out to your instructor and/or your TA and do not come to class. Take care of yourself first! (Keep in mind that if you keep us in the loop, we can always be flexible!)

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is expected of everyone at UC San Diego. This means that you must be honest, fair, responsible, respectful, and trustworthy in all of your actions. Lying, cheating or any other forms of dishonesty will not be tolerated because they undermine learning and the University's ability to certify students' knowledge and abilities. Thus, any attempt to get, or help another get, a grade by cheating, lying or dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office and will result in sanctions.

If you consider using generative AI (including software that checks/corrects your grammar), please ask your TA and/or instructor first to discuss appropriate uses of the technology. That is, don't assume that software like Grammarly is allowed. Anytime you use generative AI, you will need to cite the use of the technology and describe how you used the technology. If you are found to have committed an academic integrity violation on a major assignment in this course, you will receive a 0 and likely fail the course.

Keep in mind that you are in this class to learn the skills of critically engaging with and developing writing. Using AI to summarize readings, generate writing, or even restructure what you have already written is a violation of academic integrity. But, perhaps more importantly, means you are not learning what you are here to learn. AI is also not you. As such, it will interpret things differently than you would and it is not always correct. Take pride in the choices you make as a reader and writer and do not displace your one authority by allowing someone or something else to make those choices for you.

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.

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

For our class, the assignments should build on one another. Your individual assignments are a chance for you to reflect on and synthesize your individual research. The group assignments are a space for you to collaborate with your peers, using your individual experiences to inform a collective, interactive, research project.

Individual Assignments - 45% (total)

- [Literature Review](#) (25%)
- [Research Activities](#) (4 total, graded for completion) (10% total)

- [Final Portfolio Reflection \(10%\)](#)

Group Assignments - 45% (total)

- [Major Research Project \(Choose Your Own Adventure\) \(25%\)](#)
- [Project Proposal \(10%\)](#)
- [Project Showcase \(10%\)](#)

Participation - 10%

Participation is graded holistically and includes but is not limited to:

- Lecture participation and completion of in-class writing assignments
- Section participation and completion of in-class assignments.
- CAT courses are designed to support and strengthen your communication and thinking skills. Students must earn their participation grade, which they cannot do if they are absent. All absences from, tardiness to, or early departures from class should impact a student's overall participation grade. But, simply being present is not enough to earn a high participation grade. Further, students are responsible for reaching out to other students, and—when appropriate—TAs and instructors for missed material, whether or not the course allows for make-up work.

Grading Policies

- [CAT Writing Rubric](#)
- Failure to turn in all writing assignments will result in the loss of a full letter grade for the course.
- Research activities will be graded complete/incomplete.
- 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)	○ C+ (76.6-79.5)
○ A- (89.6-93.5)	○ C (73.6-76.5)
○ B+ (86.6-89.5)	○ C- (69.6-73.5)
○ B (83.6-86.5)	○ D (60-69.5)
○ B- (79.6-83.5)	○ 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 your TA for an appointment to discuss the grade.
 - Attend your appointment having read the TA's comments and the CAT rubric thoroughly.
 - Only after you have discussed your essay with your TA may you request a regrade from the course instructor. To request a regrade you must write a letter to the instructor

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 your TA has graded too generously.

TA Information

TA Name	Section #	Day/Time	Location	Email
Denise Rodriguez	A01	M/W 8-8:50am	CENTR 206	dtrodrig@ucsd.edu
Denise Rodriguez	A02	M/W 9-9:50am	CENTR 206	dtrodrig@ucsd.edu
Rose Pacult	A03	M/W 11-11:50am	HSS 1106B	spacult@ucsd.edu
Rose Pacult	A04	M/W 1-1:50pm	York 4050B	spacult@ucsd.edu
Kayla Aceves	A05	M/W 2-2:50pm	York 4050B	kjaceves@ucsd.edu
Kayla Aceves	A06	M/W 3-3:50pm	York 4050B	kjaceves@ucsd.edu
Abhijit Ravichandran	A07	M/W 4-4:50pm	York 4050B	aravichandran@ucsd.edu
Abhijit Ravichandran	A08	M/W 5-5:50pm	York 4050B	aravichandran@ucsd.edu
Klytie Xu	A09	M/W 8-8:50am	SSB 106	klx001@ucsd.edu
Klytie Xu	A10	M/W 9-9:50am	SSB 106	klx001@ucsd.edu
Mansi Nanavati	A11	M/W 11-11:50pm	CTL 0179	mnanavati@ucsd.edu
Mansi Nanavati	A12	M/W 1-1:50pm	MANDE B-153	mnanavati@ucsd.edu
Chengfan Zhou	A13	M/W 2-2:50pm	MANDE B-153	chz076@ucsd.edu
Chengfan Zhou	A14	M/W 3-3:50pm	MANDE B-153	chz076@ucsd.edu

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.**

Each week's readings/videos (listed under "before this week") should be completed before Monday's classes. Beginning week 2, we will start every Monday's lecture with a 5-10 minute free write in response to the week's readings. There will be specific prompts/questions you will be responding to. These free writes will count towards your participation grade.

Week 1 – Introduction to the Course and Core Readings

3/31-4/4

This week:

- Read "[A Few Rules for Predicting the Future](#)" by Octavia Butler (by Wednesday)
- Read "[Thesis on History](#)" by Walter Benjamin (by Wednesday)
- Read "[Speculative Fiction](#)" by Marek Oziewicz from the Oxford Research Encyclopedia (by Friday)
- Read "[Braiding Past into Future](#)" by David Bowles (by Friday)

Due this week:

- N/A

Week 2 – *Black Panther* and using research to drive creative invention

4/7-4/11

Before this week:

- Watch [Black Panther](#) (You can watch through Swank digital campus or on Disney+)
- Watch [Black Panther: Wakanda Forever](#) (You can watch through Swank digital campus or on Disney+)
- Read *TSIS* Ch. 15

Due this week:

- Research Activity #1 due FRIDAY 4/11 by 11:59pm

Week 3 – Representation in Speculative Fiction

4/14-4/18

Before this week:

- Listen to “[People of Color in Fantasy and Horror](#)” (1 hour)
- Read “[Africanfuturism Defined](#)” and “[Sunrise](#)” by Nnedi Okorafor
- Read “[The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas](#)” by Ursula K. LeGuin
- Read “[The Ones Who Stay and Fight](#)” by N.K. Jemisin
- Read *Let’s Talk* ch. 14, “Finding Sources”
- *Optional*: Watch “[Sci-fi Stories that Imagine a Future Africa](#)” Nnedi Okorafor *TED Talk*

Due this week:

- Draft 1 of Literature Review due FRIDAY 4/18 by 11:59pm

Week 4 – Technology and the Future

4/21-4/25

Writing Circles this week—no regular section

****No lecture Friday—asynchronous activity TBD****

Before this week:

- Read “[The Future of Bodyminds, Bodyminds of the Future](#)” by Sami Schalk
- Read “[What’s Expected of Us](#)” by Ted Chiang
- Read “[The Book of Martha](#)” by Octavia Butler
- Read *Let’s Talk* ch. 15, “Evaluating Sources, Checking Facts”
- Read *Let’s Talk* ch. 16, “Building an Annotated Bibliography”
- Review Octavia Butler, “[A Few Rules for Predicting the Future](#)”

Due this week:

- Research Activity #2 due FRIDAY 4/25 by 11:59 PM
- Group Project Proposal due SUNDAY 4/27 at 11:59pm

Week 5 – Monsters and the Monstrous

4/28-5/2

Before this week:

- Read “[There are No Monsters on Rancho Buenavista](#)” by Isabel Cañas
- Read “[Loneliness is in your Blood](#)” by Cadwell Turnbull
- Read “[If Someone You Love Has Become a Vurdalak](#)” by Sam J. Miller
- Read “[Stories with Happy Endings](#)” by Silvia Moreno-Garcia

Due this week:

- Final Draft of Literature Review due FRIDAY 5/2 by 11:59pm

Week 6 – Adaptation and Speculation

5/5-5/9

Before this week:

- Read “[The Green Ribbon](#)” by Alvin Schwartz

- Read “[The Husband Stitch](#)” by Carmen Maria Macabado

Due this week:

- Research Activity #3 due FRIDAY 5/9 by 11:59pm
- I would recommend having a firm plan in place and have started drafting your group project by the end of this week

Week 7 – Timey Wimey Things

5/12-5/16

Before this week:

- Read “[A Room of One’s Own](#)” by Tochi Onyebuchi
- Listen to the [Us in Flux interview with Tochi Onyebuchi](#) (1 hour)
- Read “[No Me Dejas](#)” by Mark Oshiro
- Read “[The Difference Between Love and Time](#)” by Catherynne M. Valente

Due this week:

- Draft 1 of Major Group Project due FRIDAY 5/16 by 11:59pm

Week 8 – Superheroes (again)

5/19-5/23

Conferences in Section this week

Before this week:

- Read “[The Token Superhero](#)” by David F. Walker
- Read “[Form 8774-D](#)” by Alex Irvine

Due this week:

- Research Activity #4 due FRIDAY 5/23 by 11:59pm

Week 9 – Pandemic Futures

5/26-5/30

****No Class Monday–Memorial Day****

Before this week:

- Read “[Speech Sounds](#)” by Octavia Butler

Due this week:

- Draft 2 of Major Group Project due TUESDAY 5/27 by 11:59pm

Week 10–Project showcases and moving forward

Project showcases will happen in discussion section during week 10

6/2-6/6

Before this week:

- N/A

Due this week:

- Final Draft of Major Group Project due FRIDAY 6/6 by 11:59pm
- Final Portfolio due Monday, 6/9 by 11:59pm

Happy Summer!