

# Media-Made America

## America's Small Screen Geographies

This writing and communication course will focus on how we imagine place, nation, and America—from country to city and suburb and even outer-space—as imagined in American culture for and through television. As we hone our communication and critical thinking skills, we will explore the construction and evolution of American landscapes. We will approach this process of inquiry from a feminist and critical race studies perspective, wherein we imagine social geographies as raced and gendered. We will begin with discussions of how the American frontier is mobilized both *historically and on television (via shows like Have Gun, Will Travel, Gunsmoke, and Westworld)*. Then, we will consider American cities, white flight and the suburbs past and present, ending with a case study of Southern California and San Diego, as it has been imagined by film and TV (i.e. we will probably watch *Anchorman*). We will read a combination of academic and popular press articles and watch a lot of television and hopefully these texts will serve as inspiration and models for your course projects, which might include essays; short reading/screening annotations; and a video essay.



**Professor:** Dr. Phoebe Bronstein

**Office Hours:** Thursdays 11-1pm in 249 PCH & by appointment

**E-mail:** [pbronstein@ucsd.edu](mailto:pbronstein@ucsd.edu)

\*The best way to contact me (aside from office hours) is via e-mail. I ask that you expect and allow 48 hours for me to respond. If you do not hear back from me within that window, please email again and politely remind me about your message. Please note that I do not respond to emails Friday evenings-Sunday mornings.

### **CAT 2 Course GOALS**

\*Please see CAT 2 rubric at the end of the syllabus

#### **Writing & Rhetoric:**

- Practice clear prose that advances your rhetorical purpose.
- Choose a tone that is appropriate to one's subject and audience.

#### **Argument: Organization, Evidence, and Analysis:**

- Craft and organize a compelling argument and support it with relevant and carefully evaluated evidence.
- Develop an ability to read, critique, and create arguments in diverse genres including, when appropriate, multi-media texts.

- Identify, analyze, and respond to explicit and implicit arguments, and understand why some parts of an argument might not be visible or open to debate.
- Acknowledge, react, and effectively integrate counterarguments and other points of view (i.e. from readings) into arguments.

### **Revision & Citation**

- Practice writing as revision--using revision effectively to re-think and re-imagine your work.
- Practice proper citation and documentation of sources, including in multimodal assignments.

### **CAT 2 Course Policies**

- *For complete CAT policies on attendance, Turnitin, and more please click [here](#).*
- Missing more than four class sessions, either lectures or sections, will result in deducting 1/3 of a letter grade off your final course grade (i.e. an A- would become a B+). Missing 8 or more classes, is grounds for failing the course. Excessive tardiness will also impact your grade and may be grounds for failure.
- I ask that you have no electronics in lecture or discussion. This includes phones, computers, tablets, etc. There is no penalty and we won't police you, however, it helps keep the class focused and engaged for us all to turn off our electronics. If you have a good reason that you need your electronic device, please talk to your TA and me. We are definitely happy to make exceptions! See [here](#), for more on the benefits of no-tech note-taking.
- Attendance: in lecture, please sit with your discussion section. Your TA will take your attendance in lecture (sometimes just by roll but also by collecting discussion questions at the end of lecture on an index card). For the complete absence policies, please click the link above.
- Lectures for this class will not posted on the course website. However, I will regularly post articles and ideas related to the course and discussion questions related to the week's topics.
- For this class, you will only turn in your work digitally. However, please keep in mind that your TA might ask you to print a copy, either peer review or for the final draft.

### **A Note on Attendance, Participation, and Class Citizenship**

This course functions best only through your consistent attendance and participation in both lecture and discussion section. This means you need to consistently show up to class prepared--having done the week's readings and screenings--and ready to engage in open and constructive dialogue.

A note on class/college citizenship: Please note that in this class, we will discuss the politics of race and gender, among other intersections of identity, such as class 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. 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.

If you are anxious about speaking in class, please let your TA know ASAP. Our goal is to get everyone talking and engaged because that is how we will all learn best! My hope in this course, is that you learn something cool (about film history! And, writing! And, argumentation!), while also learning key skills from asking good questions to drafting and writing that will help your success in the CAT sequence and in college more broadly.

### **Discrimination and Harassment**

UCSD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. This class adheres to those guidelines.

Alternative viewpoints are welcome in this classroom. *However, statements that are deemed racist, sexist, classist, ableist, homophobic, or otherwise discriminatory toward others in the class will not be tolerated and students will be asked to leave.* Students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and possess a diverse array of values and beliefs and the classroom must be a safe space to discuss opinions and ideas. As such, I will not tolerate harassment of any kind in my classroom.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

UCSD complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Any student who may require an accommodation under such provisions should contact me and your TA as soon as possible and no later than the end of the first week of classes or as soon as you become aware. No retroactive accommodations will be provided in this class.

### **CAT 1 Required Texts & Technology:**

- A notebook
- *They Say, I Say*, CAT edition (*TSIS*)
- Access to the library website, TritonEd, & UCSD e-mail
- Access to course reserves/streaming (via TritonEd) for TV shows:  
[https://library.ucsd.edu/dmr/courses/1153/Winter/2019/cat\\_2](https://library.ucsd.edu/dmr/courses/1153/Winter/2019/cat_2)

### **Assignments:**

- [Reflection #1](#) (9%)
- [Reading/Lecture/Screening Annotations](#) (21%)
- [Paper #1: Sequence Analysis](#) (20%)
- [Paper #2: Writing with Sources](#) (20%)
- Participation (10%)
  - In addition to regular participation, you will attend [ONE Art + Tech event](#). And, respond to it in one paragraph. Your response should discuss connections between our class and the event. Your response should be posted on Turnitin (on TritonEd).
- [Reflective Video Essay & Portfolio](#) (20%)
- Extra Credit (1/3 a letter grade on your final portfolio):
  - If 90% of your section fills out their CAPES, then everyone in your section receives extra credit on your final portfolio.

### **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. If you fail to participate in peer review, it will lower your final assignment grade by 1/3 a letter grade.
- Revision will be a crucial component of each major assignment. Failure to revise an assignment and/or participate in peer review will lower your final assignment grade by 1/3 a letter grade.
- 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 1/3 a letter grade.
- [Grade Contesting Policy](#) (Must be done before Friday of Week 10)

### **Course Calendar:**

\*I reserve the right to change the course calendar (including changing a screening or reading) as the course evolves. *Please note that some of the screenings contain violence and sex. Before committing to this course, look through the following readings and screenings to make sure you are comfortable with the course material.*

\*Readings are all linked from the syllabus below or in *They Say, I Say* CAT Edition (TSIS on the syllabus), which you can purchase from the bookstore. All the required TV shows are either linked below or available to stream through UCSD Library's Course Reserves. You log in with your active directory: [https://library.ucsd.edu/dmr/courses/1153/Winter/2019/cat\\_2](https://library.ucsd.edu/dmr/courses/1153/Winter/2019/cat_2) (This link is also posted on TritonEd).

\*The basic format of the course each week = context/theoretical frame, case study and writing about the topic (and learning/thinking about different writing techniques).

### **Week 1: Imagining the Nation**

Tuesday: Intro to CAT 2

Thursday: Defining the Nation

Read: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (excerpt) & "Writing as Inquiry" from *TSIS*

Watch: [The Andy Griffith Show](#) ("Andy Discovers America")

### **Week 2: Televising America**

Tuesday: Televising America (A Super Fast History)

Read: Jeremy Butler, "[An Introduction to Television Structures and Systems](#)" & *TSIS*, "Reflections" (pg 411)

Thursday: Formal Analysis (i.e. Close Reading): Mise en Scene & Cinematography

Watch: *Breaking Bad* (Pilot)

Read: [Corrigan](#) (Formal Analysis)

Recommended: "They Say," "I Say,"

**Friday: Reflection #1 Due by 11:59pm**

### **Week 3: Theorizing the Frontier**

Tuesday: Capturing the West on Camera

Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* & "[A Beginner's Guide to Classic TV Westerns](#)"

**Thursday:** Watch (in class): *The Lone Ranger* & Formal Analysis, Part 2: Editing & Sound  
Watch: *Westworld* (Pilot)  
Read: “Generating Ideas & Texts” (pg 249)  
Recommended: [Genre: The Western](#) & “[Female Ranchers are Reclaiming the American West](#)”

**Friday: Paper #1 Shotlist Due**

#### **Week 4: The Heartland**

**Tuesday:** Common Sense & Middle America

Read: [Victoria Johnson, Heartland TV, “Introduction”](#) pgs 1-19 and 29-30

**Due by 11:59pm Paper #1 Rough Draft Due**

**Thursday:** Watch (in class): [Green Acres \(Pilot\)](#), “Oliver Buys a Farm”

Watch: *Fargo* (Pilot)

Read: “Assessing your own writing” (pg 267) & “Getting Response and Revising” (pg 272) from *TSIS*

Recommended: Anne Lamott, “Shitty First Drafts” from *TSIS* (pg 261)

#### **Week 5: The Good Neighbor**

**Tuesday:** Televisual Borders

Read: Mary Beltran, “The Good Neighbor on Primetime” (via course reserves)

**Thursday:** Watch (in class): *I Love Lucy*, (“Lucy does a commercial”)

Watch: *One Day at a Time* (Ep. TBD) & *Jane the Virgin* (Pilot)

Read: “So what? Who cares?” from *TSIS* (pg 92) & “As a result” (pg 105)

**Friday: Paper #1 Final Draft Due**

#### **Week 6: Theorizing the Suburbs**

**Tuesday:** “Welcome to Suburbia”

Read: [Mary Beth Harlovich, “Sitcoms and Suburbs: Positioning the 1950s Homemaker”](#)

**Thursday:** Watch (in class): Watch: *Weeds* (Pilot) OR *Pretty Little Liars* (Pilot)

Watch: *Beulah* “[Beulah Goes Gardening](#)” (1952)

& [Bewitched \(Season 1, Ep 2\)](#) “Be It Ever So Mortgaged” (1964)

Recommended: *Black-ish* (Pilot)

Read: “Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing” (pg 336) & “Acknowledging Sources, Avoiding Plagiarism” (pg 349) from *TSIS*

**Friday: Annotations #1-4 Due**

#### **Week 7: The City**

**Tuesday:** Theorizing the City

Read: [Herman Gray, “Reaganism & The Sign of Blackness”](#)

Recommended: Recommended: Neil Smith, [The New Urban Frontier](#)

And [Jane Jacobs, The Life and Death of Great American Cities](#)

**Thursday:** Watch (in class): *The Jeffersons* (Pilot)

Watch: *ATL* (Pilot) & *The Wire* (Pilot)

Recommended: Marsha Kinder, “[Re-Wiring Baltimore](#)”

**Friday: Paper #2 Proposal Due**

**Week 8: The Final Frontier--America in Space**

Tuesday: Race to Suburban Space

Lynn Spigel, "[White Flight](#)"

Thursday: Watch (in class): *The Jetsons*, "Rosie the Robot" (1962)

Watch: *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Pilot) (1987)

Recommended: [I Dream of Jeannie, Pilot](#) (1965)

Read: "Ain't So/Is not" (pg 121) & "Synthesizing Ideas" (pg 331) from *TSIS*

**Friday: Paper #2 Rough Draft Due**

**Week 9: Land of Eternal Sun: Southern California**

Tuesday: Sunny Times in Southern California

Read: Mike Davis, [City of Quartz](#)

Recommend: Victoria Dailey, "[Piety and Perversity: The Palms of Los Angeles](#)"

Peer Review Paper #2 in Section

Thursday: Light & Dark in LA Noir

Watch: *Veronica Mars* (Pilot & Episode 2)

**Friday: Paper #2 Final Draft Due**

**Week 10: America Televised**

Tuesday: Wrapping it Up & On Reflection

**Due: Final Reflection Script Workshop in Section**

Read: "Using Visuals, Incorporating Sound" (447) & "Compiling a Portfolio" (pg 478) from *TSIS*

Thursday: TBD

**Friday: Annotations 5-7 Due**

**Finals Week:**

**Final Reflection Due by Tuesday @ 11am (the end of our Final Exam Time)**

(Note: there is no in-person exam for this course!)

## CAT 2 Rubric

GRADES	A RANGE	B RANGE	C RANGE	D-F RANGE
<b>WRITING, RHETORIC, &amp; ARGUMENT</b>	<i>Error-free prose advances writer's rhetorical purpose. Clear thesis statement that makes an original argument.</i>	<i>Generally error-free prose usually advances writer's rhetorical purpose. Strong thesis statement that makes an argument.</i>	<i>Errors and sentence constructions intermittently impede the writer's rhetorical purpose. Gestures at a thesis statement but does not quite make an argument.</i>	<i>Errors and sentence constructions impede the writer's rhetorical purpose. Does not have a thesis statement.</i>
<b>ARGUMENT ORGANIZATION</b>	<i>Organization (including paragraph structure) effectively enhance and develop the main ideas of the essay. Secondary source is woven into the paper, adding to the argument and organization.</i>	<i>Organization (including paragraph structure) is generally logical and supports the development of ideas. Secondary source is woven into the paper in a way that makes sense.</i>	<i>Organization (including paragraph structure) is somewhat logical, but may also be formulaic or sporadic in helping to develop ideas. Secondary source's integration lacks coherence.</i>	<i>Paper lacks structure; Organization (including paragraph structure) does not help develop ideas. Secondary source is not appropriately woven into the paper.</i>
<b>EXAMPLES &amp; ANALYSIS &amp; CITATION</b>	<i>Argument supported by clear, detailed, and thoughtful examples. The analysis seamlessly supports the argument. The paper uses correct citations both within the text and in the Works Cited list.</i>	<i>Argument supported by good examples. Examples could be more detailed. The analysis supports the argument but could be more specific or stronger. The paper gestures at correct citation but citations might be incomplete or incorrect.</i>	<i>Argument not supported by clear or appropriate examples. Missing clear analysis or analysis doesn't connect back to the thesis. The paper lacks correct citations, but does possess an attempt at citation in both the Works Cited list and in the text.</i>	<i>Argument lacks clear examples and/or any analysis. Examples don't serve a clear purpose towards the author's point. The paper lacks correct citations and does not attempt to correctly cite information (may border on plagiarism).</i>
<b>REVISION PROCESS</b>	<i>Consistent and significant development of written work from draft to draft and/or assignment to assignment; clear and productive effort to revise.</i>	<i>Generally consistent development of written work from draft to draft and/or assignment to assignment; clear effort to revise.</i>	<i>Superficial development of written work from draft to draft and/or assignment to assignment; attempted but unconvincing effort to revise.</i>	<i>Difficult to identify development of written work from draft to draft and/or assignment to assignment; no identifiable effort to revise.</i>