

CAT 125B: Mindful Rhetoric

Fall 2019

Instructor: Dr. Liz Gumm, Associate Director of Writing, Sixth College

Course Time & Day: Tuesday 5pm-6:50pm

Location: PCYNH 109

Dr. Gumm's Office Hours: Tuesday 10am-12pm, and by appointment

Office Location: PCYNH 251

Email: egumm@ucsd.edu

Course Description

In this public rhetoric and practical communication course we will explore the intersection between attention and expression. In particular, we will examine how the quality of our attention impacts the quality of our expression, a practice in mindfulness. Mindfulness, broadly speaking, is "the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us" (Kabat-Zinn). Mindfulness and other contemplative practices are often not taught in the classroom, but they are key components to making a fulfilling life path, whether towards a professional career, graduate school, or an unconventional journey. Some key questions considered are: What kind of attention have you paid to your presentation of self? How is opportunity impacted by your attention and self-expression? How might you develop a flexible self-narrative that allows you to blossom in a variety of spaces—from the classroom, to the hourly wage job, to the corporate boardroom, to the community forum? In this course, you will use the strategies of mindfulness to inform your rhetorical practices of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Exercises and assignments are loosely structured so as to allow you to mindfully compose texts that will support your present and/or future life-intentions.

Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Identify how different genres and citation conventions are appropriate for establishing credibility in different contexts
- Develop proficiency in public presentation, documentation, and curation.
- Direct written, spoken, and digital compositions to multiple audiences.
- Examine your authority as a writer

Materials

- Reliable access to TED, Presentation Software (Google Slides, Power Point, etc.), and ucsd email
- Note taking materials for lecture and section

Attendance

Lecture

- Lecture for this particular section is once a week for about two hours. As a consequence, if you miss one lecture session, you miss an entire week of material. There is no formalized attendance requirement for lecture, but your TAs will take attendance each week. In taking attendance, TAs may be able to better respond to those students who demonstrate engagement rather than expend effort on those students who have chosen to not participate fully.
- I notice when students come late to class and when they leave early. I recognize that sometimes schedules may necessitate late arrivals or early departures, but I find these actions disruptive to my teaching. I ask that if you have a continuing reason for arriving late or leaving early (such as another class across campus, or child care issues), please inform me and your TA as soon as possible. I am much less distracted when I know to anticipate your late arrival or early departure. If your late arrivals or early departures are due to your own preferences, I'd rather you not come at all. Please attend lecture only if you are engaged in your development as a writer, a speaker, and a member of an academic community.
- In the event of an absence--even as there is no formal attendance policy--please let your TA know as soon as possible, preferably before the absence. Knowing about absences facilitates our ability to support you, particularly when assignments are due.

Section

- Attendance at section is required for this course. Your work during sections is important for your development in public rhetoric and practical communication. You need to be a part of a community in order to give communication purpose. In many ways your section meetings are composition labs during which you workshop ideas and strategies for your projects, which are all geared towards a specific audience.
- You are allowed up to 2 absences from section without penalty to your participation grade. At 3 absences and beyond, you will lose $\frac{1}{3}$ a letter on your participation grade for every section meeting you miss.
- You are allowed up to 4 late arrivals or early departures without penalty to your participation grade. At 5 late arrivals/early departures and beyond, you will $\frac{1}{3}$ a letter on your participation grade. If you have extenuating circumstances, which affect your ability to attend the entirety of your full section meeting, please inform your TA as soon as possible. I allow TAs freedom to determine extenuating circumstances.

Technology

Lecture

- My ideal preference is for students to use only paper materials during lecture. However, I recognize that this may not be ideal for you as a student. Therefore, I welcome laptops and tablets in lecture as a means to take notes or read/refer to material. If you are found to be surfing the Internet, messaging people, or otherwise not attending to CAT 125, you will be assumed to be absent. Such disengaged behavior will warrant disengaged responses to your assignments and questions.
- If you are someone whose brain requires various forms of distraction in order to actually focus (like doodling), please conduct this behavior on paper or in another physical fashion (fidget spinner, for example) and inform me about it.
- Cell phones are ALWAYS prohibited. If you do not have access to a laptop or a tablet, please take notes on readings and/or print out readings and bring them to class. If you are using your cell phone during class, you will be assumed to be absent. Such disengaged behavior will warrant disengaged responses to your assignments and questions.

Section

- Please refer to your TA's specific policies regarding technology in the classroom. They are within their rights to either ban or allow any/all technology according to their teaching styles.

What you can expect of me...

- I will be prepared for lecture and invested in the material
- I will be enthusiastic and animated during discussions (probably 95% of the time), despite the fact that I am a morning person and this is an evening class
- I will respond to emails within 24 hours
- I will be as invested in your work as you are
- I will treat your work with honesty and compassion
- I will remember your name if you come to my office hours at least twice
- I will make fun of myself and probably make very cheesy jokes
- I may curse, but I will try not to
- 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 make time to meet with you if you are unable to come to my office hours
- I will be a safe sounding board for ideas, whether related to your assignments or not
- I will write letters of recommendation for any student who visits with me during office hours at least twice and demonstrates sincere engagement with the course
- I will take earnest feedback about the course seriously, and will solicit critique and feedback at least once before the end of the quarter

What I expect of you...

- You will attend lectures on time, with a good attitude
- You will attend section on time, with a good attitude
- You will take responsibility for your actions and feelings, especially as they manifest within the course
- You will do the work assigned, 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 read the syllabus and refer to it throughout the quarter
- You will treat your fellow classmates, your TAs, and myself with dignity; you will not engage in racist, sexist, classist, ablist, homophobic, transphobic, ethnocentric, fat-shaming, faith-shaming, or otherwise hateful communication. There is a difference between disrespectful/hateful speech and reasonable disagreement. 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)

Grading Schema

The Culture, Art, and Technology Program of Sixth College makes use of a set grading schema, which means that certain letter grades correspond to specific numerical grades. This schema prevents grade inflation and point bargaining. All major assignments (those with a draft and final submission) and participation will be assessed according to the grading schema. Minor assignments will be assessed either according to a check system (✓ + 100%, ✓ 90%, ✓ - 80%, X 0%) or a complete or incomplete system. Assignment descriptions will indicate the grading schema.

Major Assignment Grading Schema:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---------|------------|
| A+ = 98.5% | A = 95% | A- = 92.5% |
| B+ = 88.5% | B = 85% | B- = 82.5% |
| C+ = 78.5% | C = 75% | C- = 72.5% |
| D = 65% (no D+ or D-) ¹ | F = 50% | |

¹ While a D is technically a passing grade, you should know that any work that receives C- or below is considered marginal in acceptability; be wary of presenting such work for a public audience. If you take this course P/NP, you must make at least 72.5% overall to pass the course.

Assignments

Below are brief descriptions of our assignments. More detailed assignment descriptions can be found on TED under the Assignments Page. All assignments should ascribe to UCSD's policy of academic integrity.

Major Assignments

Speech -- 25%

- You will compose an Ignite Style speech, which is a choreographed 5 minute speech to 20 automatically timed slides. A 5 minutes speech is usually around 500 words. The subject of your speech will be similar to NPR's program "This I believe," or something that reflects your everyday-ethics.

Personal Narrative -- 25%

- You will write either a statement of purpose for a graduate program, an artist's statement for a gallery, or a short memoir for an essay collection. 500-700 words.

Final Project -- 25%

- You will design a final project that you believe reflects your professional work. If you aim to become a journalist, you can write a researched article for a specific publication; if you aim to become an artist, you can assemble a portfolio; if you aim to become a scientist, you can write a grant proposal; if you aim to become a science teacher, you can develop a YouTube channel of "how-to" videos. You will design a project that presents your work to a public audience, which ideally you can use for a future purpose. For this project, you will write a proposal that pitches your idea to your TA, outlines the aims of your project, and profiles the intended audience. 300-500 words.

Participation -- 10%

Minor Assignments

Journals (5) -- 15%

- Journal assignments will ask you practice different genres of digital and public writing, which will respond to specific prompts. Entries should be 250-300 words each.

Course Schedule

*This schedule is subject to change. Please pay attention to weekly announcements by your instructor and TA. Any reading listed should be read before the date under which it is listed.

Week 0 -- No Course Meetings

Week 1 -- Introductions & Defining Terms

(Tuesday October 1 - Thursday October 3)

Lecture - Why mindful rhetoric?

Section 1 - Building class community

Section 2 - Speech Invention

- Read "[Key Findings from 2018 Employer Research](#)"

Week 2 -- Persona & Everyday Ethics

(Tuesday October 8 - Thursday October 10)

Lecture - How do I define myself to others?

- [Read Cave, "Not Nothing"](#)
- [Read McRaney, "The Backfire Effect"](#)
- **DUE: Journal #1: Blog**

Section 1- Ignite Style Discussion

- [Listen to 3-5 "This I Believe" Speeches](#)
- [Watch 3-5 Ignite-Style Speeches](#)

Section 2 - Ethics Discussion

- **DUE: Speech First Draft (script & slides)**

Week 3 -- Embodiment & Audience Analysis

(Tuesday October 15 - Thursday October 17)

Lecture - Who am I speaking to and how do I speak to them?

- [Read "The Cocktail Party Test"](#)
- [Read Chiarella, "The Art of the Handshake"](#)
- [Read Chiarella, "The Invisible Grip"](#)
- **DUE: Journal #2: Photo Story**

Section 1- Audience Analysis

Section 2 - Speech Practice/Discussion

Week 4 -- Humor & Holding Space

(Tuesday October 22 - Thursday October 24)

Lecture - Leggo my Ego!

- [Read Gilbert, “Hungry Ghosts”](#)
- [Read Ryan, “How to tell dragon-slaying stories”](#)

Section 1 - **Deliver Speech Final Draft**

Section 2 - **Deliver Speech Final Draft**

Week 5 -- Genre, Tradition, & Innovation

(Tuesday October 29 - Thursday October 31)

Lecture - Oh that's what English class was for?

- [Read UC info on “Personal Statements”](#)
- [Read UC info on “Statements of Purpose”](#)
- **DUE: Journal #3: How-To**

Section 1- Evaluating Narratives

Section 2- Personal Narrative Invention

Week 6 - Semiotics, Evaluation, & Attention

(Tuesday November 5 - Thursday November 7)

Lecture - “The Sign”: I saw the sign, did you see the sign?

Section 1 - Digital Analysis

- [Read Baheri, “Your Ability to Can Even: A Defense of Internet Linguistics”](#)
- [Read Chatfield, “The Attention Economy”](#)

Section 2 - Revision Discussion

- **DUE: Personal Narrative First Draft**

Week 7 - Framing & Curiosity

(Tuesday November 12 - Thursday November 14)

Lecture - “Your story has value” (we will watch *Nanette* in class and complete a reflective worksheet)

- **DUE: Journal #4: Website Evaluation**

Section 1 - Ethics of Curiosity & Passion

- [Read Gilbert, “Passion vs. Curiosity” & “Devotion to Inquisitiveness”](#)

Section 2 - Grappling with Self-Advertisement

- [Watch Wapnick, “Why some of use don't have one true calling”](#)
- **DUE: Proposal for Final Project (First Draft)***

*this is the final deadline to turn in your proposal; you may turn in your proposal any time previous to this week's Thursday section meeting

Week 8 - Difficulty, Discomfort, & Rhetorical Listening

(Tuesday November 19 - Thursday November 21)

Lecture - The Alchemy of Mindfulness

- [Read Bennett, “The Danger in Fake Positivity and Spiritual Bypassing”](#)
- [Read Warrell, “Why Getting Comfortable with Discomfort is Crucial to Success”](#)
- [Watch Brown, “The Power of Vulnerability”](#)

Section 1 - Failure Discussion

Section 2 - Mindfulness & Social Justice

Week 9 - Kairos & Chronos

(Tuesday November 26)

Lecture - Stories about time

- [Read Pink, “What kind of genius are you?”](#)
- **DUE: Personal Narrative Final Draft**

Section 1 - Flexible Goal Setting

Section 2 - No Meeting, Fall Break

Week 10 - Media & Self-Care

(Tuesday December 3 - Thursday December 5)

Lecture - How to take care of yourself within multi-media

- [Read Gilbert, “The Teaching of Pain”](#)
- [Read Tokumitsu, “The Politics of the Curation Craze”](#)

Section 1 - Personal Practice

Section 2 - Working Day

Finals Week -- Tuesday December 10, by 5pm

- **DUE: Final Project, Final Draft**
- **DUE: Journal #5: Rhetoric Reflection**