

To Tell Your Story

Public Rhetoric, Media, & Autobiography

“Every body has a story and a history.”

-Roxanne Gay, *Hunger* (3).

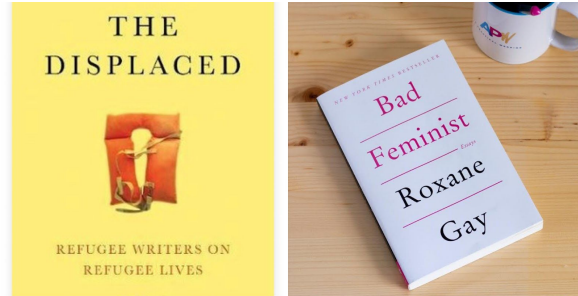
CAT 125

MW 11-11:50am

Dr. Phoebe Bronstein

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Office Hours: Mon 1-2pm & Wed 12pm-1pm
& by appointment



In this public rhetoric and practical communication course, we will use media narratives from stand-up to documentary film and TV episodes to explore how we tell our personal, professional, and political stories. The narratives we'll engage with from *Nanette* to *Homecoming* and *Chef's Table*, will situate personal stories, research, and expertise within broader histories and geopolitics, mobilizing rhetorical devices from humor and emotion to lighting and costuming. The texts we watch will serve as (fun, hopefully) springboards to discuss different topics and rhetorical strategies and how to use those same strategies in our own self-presentation. This course will be part lecture, part discussion, and part 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 (in writing) developing strategic plans, turning our goals into actions, and discussing and developing a work-life balance. 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 also meeting course goals.

Ultimately, this is a class that is meant to be useful to you! And, it is a work in progress--so be kind and make constructive suggestions, if there is something that occurs to you!

Course Goals:

- Develop proficiency in public presentation, documentation, and curation.
- Understand and employ various rhetorical strategies
- Direct written, spoken, and digital compositions to multiple audiences.
- Examine your authority as a writer (and how authority in authorship works in terms of race, gender, and sexuality)

- Identify how different genres and citation conventions are appropriate for establishing credibility in different contexts.

Contacting me:

- **Office Hours:** Monday 1-2pm and Wednesday 12-1pm in 249 PCH & by appointment
- **E-mail:** 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.

Your TAs & Section Schedule

<u>MW</u>	<u>8-8:50 AM</u>	<u>HSS 2305A</u>	<u>BOBBY EDWARDS</u> <u>rsedward@ucsd.edu</u>
<u>MW</u>	<u>9-9:50</u>	<u>HSS 2305A</u>	
<u>MW</u>	<u>10-10:50</u>	<u>HSS 2305A</u>	<u>ZACH HILL</u> <u>wzhill@ucsd.edu</u>
<u>MW</u>	<u>10-10:50</u>	<u>MANDE</u> <u>B-152</u>	<u>KE NIE</u> <u>knie@ucsd.edu</u>
<u>MW</u>	<u>5-5:50</u>	<u>HSS 2305B</u>	<u>JUAN JOSE ROJO SOLIS</u> <u>jjrojo@ucsd.edu</u>
<u>MW</u>	<u>6-6:50</u>	<u>HSS 2305B</u>	
<u>MW</u>	<u>1-1:50</u>	<u>CENTR 218</u>	<u>KE NIE</u> <u>knie@ucsd.edu</u>
<u>MW</u>	<u>1-1:50</u>	<u>CENTR 217A</u>	<u>ZACH HILL</u> <u>wzhill@ucsd.edu</u>
<u>MW</u>	<u>3-3:50</u>	<u>MCGIL 2315</u>	<u>WAMBUI WAINAINA</u> <u>lwainain@ucsd.edu</u>
<u>MW</u>	<u>4-4:50</u>	<u>MCGIL 2315</u>	
<u>MW</u>	<u>5-5:50</u>	<u>MCGIL 2315</u>	<u>AMY WANG</u> <u>acw001@ucsd.edu</u>
<u>MW</u>	<u>6-6:50</u>	<u>MCGIL 2315</u>	

Required Texts & Technology

- Netflix subscription, weeks 2-6 ([30 days free](#))
- Access to Canvas
- Notebook & Writing Utensil
- Recommended: *They Say, I Say CAT Edition*

Big things to know & keep in mind (policy-wise) ...

- *For complete CAT policies on attendance, Turnitin, and more please click [here](#).*
- **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 and quiz responses). Missing more than four class sessions, either lectures or sections, will result in deducting $\frac{1}{3}$ of a letter grade off your final course grade (i.e. an A- would become a B+). Missing 8 or more classes (i.e. 2 weeks of class), is grounds for failing the course. Excessive tardiness will also impact your grade and may be grounds for an absence.
- **Turning in Assignments:** All assignments are due by the day and time marked on the syllabus. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments will be due electronically (via Turnitin).
- **Late work:** We will accept late work for three days after it is due. For each day it is late, we will deduct $\frac{1}{3}$ a letter grade. The maximum deducted will be 1 full letter grade. After that (i.e. after 3 days) you receive an F/0. Work more than three days late, will result in a failing grade for the assignment. If you are concerned you will miss a deadline, please contact your TA at least 48 hours before the assignment is due to work out a new deadline. (We will not give extensions retroactively)
- **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.
- Lectures for this class will not posted on the course website. However, I will regularly post articles, ideas, and screening questions related to the course and the week's topics.

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.
- 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 $\frac{1}{3}$ a letter grade.
- 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. If you fail to do a reflection, it will lower your final assignment grade by $\frac{1}{3}$ a letter grade.
- [Grade Contesting Policy](#) (Must be done before Monday of Week 10)

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 citizenship and community: 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 media! And, writing! And, storytelling!), while also learning key skills from asking good questions to drafting and writing that will help you succeed in college and the workplace 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)

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability should (if needed) provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are then required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact your professor privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged. No retroactive accommodations can be provided. The CAT OSD liaison is Lynette Brossard:

lbrossard@ucsd.edu.

Academic Integrity

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.

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.

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-)
F = 50%

Assignments

Quick note: All assignments must be original work created for this class and should ascribe to UCSD's policy of academic integrity. All major assignments will be graded using the [CAT 125 Rubric](#).

Quick note #2: Please make sure you refresh the assignment pages before you start working on them. The assignments are live documents and I will revise them as the course goes along (so, until I go over them in lecture, they are a somewhat in motion).

- [Resume/CV](#)--10%
- [Personal Narrative](#) -- 25%
- [Public Performance 101](#) -- 25%
- [Final](#) Reflection & Portfolio -- 10%
- [Participation](#) -- 10%
- [Reflective Journals \(4\)](#) -- 20%
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. (Pass/Fail)
- **Extra Credit:** if 90% or more of your section fills out the CAPES, then the whole section receives + $\frac{1}{3}$ on the Final Portfolio.

Course Calendar

Please note readings and screenings are liable to change as the class progresses. I will never add additional readings or assignments, but may revise and substitute what is already here (If I change anything, I will give you lots of notice and reminders!). All screenings and readings should be done before you arrive at lecture and/or section the day that they are on the calendar (unless stated otherwise). If you have readings that you think would be a great fit, please send them my way!

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

Week #	Monday (Lecture & Discussion: Other People’s Stories)	Wednesday (Writing Stuff & Workshopping & Connection to Your Stories)	Assignments (all due by Friday at 11:59pm)
Week 1: Introductions	Welcome & Introduction to 125	In-class: “The Power of Vulnerability” Recommended: Sarah Todd, “What Rescue Dogs Can Teach us about Vulnerability” & Alexandra Schwartz, “Improving Ourselves to Death”	Reflection #1: What are you interested in--academic-wise, in your personal life? And, why? How did you develop that interest? (In a perfect world, what would you want to do? And, why?)
Week 2: Stories & Power <i>*Please note that some of the readings & screenings discuss sexual violence (Gay & Nanette)</i>	<u>Read:</u> Gloria Anzaldúa “Speaking in Tongues” & Roxanne Gay, “Some Jokes are Funnier Than Others” <u>Recommended:</u> “Margaret Cho: I Invented the Cancellation”	<u>Watch:</u> <i>Nanette</i> (Netflix)	Reflection #2: Create a strategic plan. What are your main goals for the next year (or two)? What about this term? What things prevent you from working towards those goals? Map them out as SMART Goals. Note: This reflection

	Topics: Humor, Personal Narrative, Regulating stories		may be a bit longer than the word count.
Week 3: Organizing Silences & Claiming Space (Part I)	<u>No Class MLK Day</u>	<p><u>Read:</u> Audre Lorde, "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action" & Joseph Azam, "Last, First, Middle"</p> <p>Recommended: "Introduction," Nonbinary: Memoirs of Gender & Identify</p>	Resume/CV Assignment Draft due Thurs in section/Final due by 11:59pm Fri
Week 4: Claiming Professional Space & On Brand (Part II)	<p><u>Watch:</u> <i>Homecoming</i> (Netflix)</p> <p>Topics: Developing a brand; personal yet marketable</p>	<p><u>Read:</u> Michael Blackman, "The decade Beyonce made herself into a legend" & Kiana Fitzgerald, "Beyonce is the 21st Century Master of Leveling Up"</p> <p>**Wellness Conference</p>	Reflection #3: You are curious about X--why do you want to work in that field? And/or why do you want to go to graduate school? What do you see as your role? What do you imagine contributing? Have there been challenges to you moving down your desired path? If so, what and how have they affected you?
Week 5: Narrating Home (Telling Stories with Food)	<p><u>Watch:</u> <i>Chef's Table</i>, "Mashama Bailey" (Vol 6, Ep 1) & Recommended: <i>Ugly Delicious</i>, "Home Cooking" (Episode 3) (Netflix) OR <i>Salt, Fat, Acid, Eat</i> (all!)</p> <p><u>Read:</u> Kat Chow, "Going Home with Ocean Vuong"</p> <p>Topics: Food politics;</p>	<p>Talking Genre: What makes a great personal statement & statement of purpose or memoir/journalistic essay? (+Workshop)</p> <p><u>Read:</u> UC Personal Statements & Statements of Purpose</p>	Personal Narrative Rough Draft

	Using personal experience effectively		
Week 6: On Curiosity & Asking Questions	<u>Read:</u> Gilbert, “Curiosity and Devotion to Inquisitiveness” & Finding Fred, “The Genius of Empathy” (Ep 1)	Pause, Reflect, & Assess: what have we read/watched so far? What have you thought about the narratives we’ve encountered? How do you think of autobiography now (differently/the same)? What goals did you set? How is the term going for you in general?	Personal Narrative Final Draft
Week 7: Turning Out: Questions & Researching Answers (& Getting some sleep)	<u>No Class: President’s Day</u>	Hasan Minaj, <i>Patriot Act</i> , “Oil” (Vol 1) and “Brazil, Corruption and the Rainforest” (Vol 4) (Netflix) (Note: episodes might change) <u>Read:</u> Viet Than Nguyen, “From Here to Home”	Reflection #4: Sleep/Life Habits: Pause and reflect on your daily life and sleep habits. Are they sustainable? What do you like? What would you change? (Here, you may instead reflect on the Wellness Conference if you attended!)
Week 8: Talking About your stuff	<u>Listen:</u> 3-5 “This I Believe Speeches” & Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”	<u>Read:</u> Tom Chiarella, “The Invisible Grip” & “How to Tell a Dragon Slaying Story” <u>Due in section:</u> Speech (Rough Draft)	
Week 9: The Internet, A Million Audiences, & Our Digital Stories	<u>Watch:</u> “Walk, Run, Cha Cha Cha” <u>Read:</u> Roxanne Gay, “When Twitter Does What Journalism Can’t” & TBD	Digital Decluttering: <u>Read:</u> “The Attention Economy”	Speech (Final Draft & Slides)--Uploaded to Turnitin. Your actual speech will be due the day you sign up for it this week (i.e. Mon or Wed in section)

Week 10: Public Storytelling & Reflecting Back	Selected Student Speeches!	Reflection & Wrapping it Up Read: Tim Kreider, " The Busy Trap "	<u>Final Reflection & Portfolio</u>
Happy Spring Break!!	Relax.	Reboot.	One more term to go!

Some Random Recommended Readings & Screenings:

(AKA cool personal essays, poems, and screenings that did not fit on the syllabus and are also online):

Arielle Bernsetin, "[Mari Kondo and the Privilege of Clutter](#)"

Chef's Table, "Cristina Martinez" (Vol 5, Ep 1) (Netflix)

Phoebe Bronstein, "[Our Modern Attempt to Control Pregnancy is Just another Attempt to Control Women's Bodies](#)" & "[Violently Inclined](#)" & "[Quiet Times](#)"

Kristi Coulter, "[Enjoli](#)"

Hannah Gadsby, "[Three Ideas. Three Contradictions. Or not.](#)"

Roxane Gay, "A Tale of Three Coming Out Stories" (in *Bad Feminist*)

Roxane Gay, "[What fullness is](#)"

Myriam Gurba, "[Pendeja, You Ain't My Steinbeck](#)"

bell hooks, "[Moving Beyond Pain](#)"

Wayne Koestenbaum, "[My 80s](#)"

NPR, "[She's Funny](#)" (NPR Special Column)

David Sedaris, "[Stepping Out](#)"

Jenny Slate, *Stage Fright* (Netflix)

Amy Schumer, *Growing* (Netflix)

Ocean Vuong, "[Someday I'll Love Ocean Vuong](#)"

Wambui Wainaina, "[Biographical Friction](#)"

Ali Wong, *Baby Cobra* (Netflix)

PS If you have personal essays you think are awesome, please share with me and I'll add them to the list!