

# Un/Natural Environments

American Histories of Environmental Representation in Film & Media

CAT 1, Fall 2022

MWF 10-10:50am

## **Professor: Dr. Phoebe Bronstein**

**Office Hours:** Monday 9am and Wednesday 11am at Mandeville Coffee Cart  
& 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.

## **A Note on Course Delivery**

This course will be in-person and attendance is important to the success of the class. That said, it is still a pandemic so we will be flexible and gracious. My hope is that if we all work together, we can use this course to develop a thoughtful approach to what is occurring around us. My main ask is that you are patient with me, your TAs, and mostly yourselves. If at any time you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. *Please see below for course policies.*

## **Course Description**

From the notion of wilderness to the construction of park spaces (and even the open spaces at the UC San Diego campus), this CAT 1 course will explore the stories that we tell and that American popular media has told about the environment, and people's relationships to the "natural world." To do this, we will watch movies like *Waterworld* and *When the Levees Broke* and read literature like Robin Kimmerer's "Skywoman Falling" from (*Braiding Sweetgrass*) and excerpts from *Walden*. These texts will help historicize American environmental narratives, and make visible the politics underlying and propelling those narratives. In what ways can we come to see and understand how histories of environmental representation shape our daily lives and assumptions about nature/natural spaces along lines of race, class, gender, ability, and sexuality? Using the past to think towards our collective futures and the effects of climate change, the texts we read and watch in this course are meant to promote reflection and conversation on our own assumptions, politics, and engagement with environmental representations, who we are, and where we (including the planet) are going.

## **Course Learning Objectives:**

- Understand writing as a process (i.e. that includes, brainstorming, drafting, peer review, revision, reflection)

- Develop metacognitive and critical reading and thinking skills (including learning the parts of an argument)
- Learn how to ask constructive questions
- Practice writing as a learning strategy (this entails developing the ability to critically read, summarize, and begin to respond to arguments)
- Learn how to read critically across a variety of genres and identify disciplinary discourse.

### **Core Concepts:**

*By the end of CAT 1, students should be able to understand and define the following terms/ideas.*

- Ideology
- History as narrative
- Production of Knowledge (Culture, Art, Technology)

### **Core Writing Skills Fostered:**

- Critical curiosity (active reading & asking productive questions)
- Summary (including identifying the parts of an argument when applicable)
- Analysis of a text
- Paragraph structure
- Reflection & metacognition

### **Required Texts/Technology**

- Access to Canvas
- *They Say, I Say* CAT Edition
- A notebook and pen/pencil

### **Course & Program Policies:**

#### **Attendance**

While we are still operating under unusual (or now usual?!) circumstances, your attendance and participation in the course is still critical to the class function and your own experience. Community is at the center of writing pedagogy and we are determined to find ways to make this happen, even amidst a continued pandemic. Lecture and discussion sections build community and provide a space to work through your ideas and engage with your peers. Below are our attendance policies:

- 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).
- The Basic policy is this: *you are allowed 4 absences (i.e. 1.33 weeks of CAT 1, including section and lecture attendance). For every absence after 4, you will lose 1/3 a letter grade of your overall course grade.* Missing 8 or more classes (sections and/or lectures) is grounds for failing the course.

- Lectures for this class will not be posted on the course website (they will not be recorded and using Zoom to attend is not an option). However, I will regularly post our lecture slides and ideas related to the course and discussion questions related to the week's topics.

Please speak to me 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 me 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 will always be flexible!)*

### **Technology**

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.

### **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 media! And, writing! And, argumentation!), while also learning key skills from asking good questions to drafting and writing that will help you succeed in the CAT sequence and in college more broadly.

Please see Canvas for [UCSD's Principles of Community](#) for a description of your campus's commitments. For more information, <http://diversity.ucsd.edu>.

### **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.

### **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](mailto:lbrossard@ucsd.edu).

### **CalFresh & Basic Needs Information**

If you are facing food insecurity, we encourage you to contact [calfresh@ucsd.edu](mailto: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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Grading Policies**

- Failure to turn in any major writing assignments will result in a failure of the course, regardless of numerical grade.
- All assignments will be turned in electronically through Canvas (and run through Turnitin).
- Grades are assigned by letter and correspond to specific numerical percentages. Limitations on possible numerical grades enable more effective holistic grading on essay assignments, as well as discourage arguments over points.
- 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 and with a written explanation for why you deserve a re-grade.
  - Only after you have discussed your essay with your TA may you request a regrade from the course instructor. (They can always say no)
  - Please keep in mind that a re-grade could result in a lower final grade, which would stand.

### **Engagement**

CAT courses are designed to support and strengthen your communication and thinking skills. Your participation in the course is required for the development of these skills and will be assessed according to the following rubric:

**Excellent (10)**- You are well prepared for lecture and section, demonstrated by: having all your materials; consistently contributing to discussion; asking productive questions; listening actively and taking notes; engaging in group work; supporting and respecting other students; respecting TAs, the instructor and course material; attending office hours; coming to lecture and section on time and staying for the entire class time; taking responsibility for any work or material missed if absent; overall proactive.

**Good (9)** - You are usually prepared for lecture and section, demonstrated by: contributing to discussion; listening actively; engaging in group work; respecting other students; respecting TAs, the instructor, and course material; mostly coming to lecture and section on time and staying for the entire class time; overall responsible.

**Adequate (8)** - You are inconsistently prepared for lecture and section, demonstrated by: rarely contributing to discussion; missing materials; managing time poorly; working well with others, but unable to contribute fairly; respecting TAs, instructor, and course materials; mostly coming to lecture and section on time and staying for the entire class time; overall, inconsistent.

**Developing (7)** - You are physically present but mentally disengaged from the course, demonstrated by: never contributing to discussion in lecture or section; consistently coming to class late or leaving early; working well with others, but unable to contribute fairly; failing to develop any relationships with TAs and/or instructor; overall, disengaged.

**Unacceptable (5)** - You demonstrate through behavior and/or language that you are uninterested in learning; or, alternatively, you are regularly disrespectful of other students, TAs, the instructor, or course material.