

**CAT 125**  
**Public Rhetoric and Practical Communication**  
**University of California, San Diego**

*\*Syllabus is subject to change at any point in the quarter*

**Professor:** Romain Delaville

**Email:** [rdelaville@ucsd.edu](mailto:rdelaville@ucsd.edu)

**Class hours:** MWF, 10-10:50a

**Class location:** CTL 0178

**Office hours:** M 11a-12p in my office, W 11a-12p on [Zoom](#)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

In this public rhetoric and practical communication course, we will use media narratives from stand-up to documentary film and television episodes to explore how we tell our personal, professional, and political stories. The narratives we'll engage with, from Nanette to Gloria Andalúa's writings and the 1619 Project, 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 play with those same strategies in our own self-presentation.

The course will be part discussion and part writing 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 for reading, watching, and listening rhetorically, i.e. being mindful of contexts, messages, and audiences. You will also practice several modes of rhetorical speaking and writing, making decisions about content and structure to inform, persuade, or tell a story, and ultimately support you as you hone your voice and style. Finally, you will develop strategic plans, turn your goals into actions, and discuss and develop 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 highlighting different stages of the writing process, from pre-writing and drafting to peer review and collaborative revision.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

CAT 125 students work towards these goals:

- Practice reflective strategies for reading, watching, listening, and writing.
- Develop proficiency in public presentation, documentation, and curation.
- Examine authority as a writer and how authority in authorship works in terms of race, gender, and sexuality.
- Understand and employ various rhetorical strategies appropriately.
- Clearly direct written, spoken, and digital compositions to multiple and diverse audiences.

### **Required Texts & Technology**

- Netflix subscription, weeks 3-6 (you only need one month for this class)
- Access to Canvas & Course Reserves
- Notebook & Writing Utensil
- Recommended: *They Say, I Say* CAT Edition

### **GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

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/R Rubric.

- [Personal Narrative](#) -- 25%
- [Public Performance 101](#) -- 30%
- [Final Reflection](#) -- 15% (Complete/Incomplete)
- [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. These are graded complete/incomplete. One of these includes a [Resume/CV](#) assignment.

- [Participation](#) -- 10%

You must earn your participation grade through various forms of engagement with the course. Such forms include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging in section discussion and online communication
- Asking questions in instructor office hours
- Completing readings
- Working respectfully with others
- Coming to section ON TIME
- Taking notes
- Putting away distractions (no cell phones!)
- Attending office hours with your Instructor

A – 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 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 and attentive.

B – You are somewhat prepared for lecture and section, demonstrated by: occasionally contributing to discussion; listening actively; engaging in group work; respecting other students; respecting the instructor, and course material; mostly coming to lecture and section on time and staying for the entire class time; overall responsible.

C – 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 the instructor, and course materials; mostly coming to lecture and section on time and staying for the entire class time; overall, inconsistent.

D – 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 the instructor; overall, disengaged.

O – You demonstrate through behavior and/or language that you are uninterested in learning; or, alternatively, you are regularly disrespectful of other students, the instructor, or course material.

Your final grade will be determined by the following point scale:

A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	69-60
F	60-0

**COURSE CALENDAR:**

<b>WEEK 1: PERSONAL NARRATIVE, STORYTELLING, POWER &amp; PERMISSION</b>		
<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Readings</u></b>	<b><u>Assignments</u></b>
<b>Monday, January 9</b>		<b>Reflective journal #1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Due Friday, 11:59pm</li></ul>
<b>Wednesday, January 11</b>	<i>To prepare for class, please watch:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brené Brown, "<a href="#">The Power of Vulnerability</a>"</li></ul>	
<b>Friday, January 13:</b>	<i>To prepare for class, please read/listen to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finding Fred, "<a href="#">A Genius of Empathy</a>" (Ep 1)</li><li>• Ocean Vuong, "<a href="#">Someday I'll Love Ocean Vuong</a>"</li></ul>	
<b>WEEK 2: STORIES &amp; POWER</b>		
<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Readings</u></b>	<b><u>Assignments</u></b>
<b>Monday, January 16</b>		<b>Reflective journal #2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Due Friday, 11:59pm</li></ul>
<b>Wednesday, January 18</b>	<i>To prepare for class, please listen to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Abdellah Taia, "<a href="#">Oum Zahra Goes to the Movies.</a>" <i>Another Morocco</i></li></ul>	

Friday, January 20	<p>To prepare for class, please read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emily McCrary-Ruiz-Esparza, <a href="#">Generation Amazing!!! How We're Draining Language of Its Power</a></li> <li><a href="#">(EP 18) PT 9- UNDER THE BLACKLIGHT: NARRATING THE NIGHTMARE &amp;(RE)IMAGINING THE POSSIBLE</a></li> </ul>	
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**WEEK 3: LAUGHTER, JOY, & PAIN**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
Monday, January 23	<p>To prepare for class, please read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audre Lorde, "<a href="#">The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action</a>"</li> </ul>	<p><b>CV/Resume</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due Friday, 11:59pm</li> </ul>
Wednesday, January 25	<p>To prepare for class, please read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roxanne Gay, "<a href="#">Some Jokes are Funnier Than Others</a>"</li> </ul>	
Friday, January 27	<p>To prepare for class, please watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Nanette</i> (Netflix). Disclaimer: This video does contain references to sexual violence.</li> </ul>	

**WEEK 4: ORGANIZING SILENCES & CREATING SPACE**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
Monday, January 30	<p>To prepare for class, please read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gloria Anzaldúa "<a href="#">Speaking in Tongues</a>"</li> </ul>	<p><b>Personal narrative draft</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due Sunday, 11:59pm</li> </ul>
Wednesday, February 1	<p>To prepare for class, please read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joseph Azam, "<a href="#">Last, First, Middle</a>"</li> </ul>	
Friday, February 3	<p>To prepare for class, please read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vauhini Vara, "<a href="#">Ghosts</a>"</li> </ul>	

**WEEK 5: TELLING A STORY: FASHION**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
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<b>Monday, February 6</b> Personal Branding Guest Speaker: Suna	Personal Narrative Draft - Peer Review	<b>Personal Narrative Final Draft</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due Wednesday, Feb 15, 11:59pm</li> </ul>
<b>Wednesday, February 9</b>  Personal Narrative Peer Review	<i>To prepare for class, please read and watch:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marita Golden, <a href="#">My Black Hair: a Tangled Story of Race and Politics in America</a></li> <li>Oscar-winning short film <a href="#">Hair Love</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Friday, February 11</b>	Personal Narrative Draft - Workshop  <i>To prepare for class, please read:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nadra Kareem Nittle, <a href="#">A Guide to Understanding and Avoiding Cultural Appropriation</a></li> <li>Minh-Ha T. Pham, <a href="#">Fashion's Cultural Appropriation Debate: Pointless</a></li> </ul>	

**WEEK 6: ON CURIOSITY & ASKING QUESTIONS**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
<b>Monday, February 13:</b>	<i>To prepare for class, please read:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gilbert, "<a href="#">Curiosity and Devotion to Inquisitiveness</a>"</li> </ul>	<b>Reflective journal #4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due Sunday, 11:59pm</li> </ul>
<b>Wednesday, February 15:</b>	<i>To prepare for class, please watch:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"<a href="#">Examined Life</a>" (excerpts)</li> </ul>	
<b>Friday, February 17</b>	<i>To prepare for class, please watch:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"<a href="#">The Medium is the Message</a>"</li> </ul>	

**WEEK 7: TURNING OUT: ASKING QUESTIONS & RESEARCHINGS ANSWERS (FOOD)**

<u>Date/Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
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<b>Monday, February 20</b>	No class	<b>Public performance - outline for Video/Speech</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due Sunday, 11:59pm</li> </ul>
<b>Wednesday, February 22</b>	<i>To prepare for class, please watch:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Chef's Table</i>, "Mashama Bailey" (Netflix, Vol 6, Ep 1)</li> </ul>	
<b>Friday, February 24</b>	<i>To prepare for class, please read:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chantha Nguon &amp; Kim Green, "<a href="#">The Gradual Extinction of Softness</a>"</li> </ul>	
<b><u>WEEK 8: TALKING ABOUT YOUR STUFF</u></b>		
<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Readings</u></b>	<b><u>Assignments</u></b>
<b>Monday, February 27</b>	Ignite style talks and visual rhetoric	<b>Public performance – rough draft</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due Friday, 11:59pm</li> </ul>
<b>Wednesday, March 1</b>	<i>To prepare for class, please read:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tom Chiarella, "<a href="#">The Invisible Grip</a>" &amp; "<a href="#">How to Tell a Dragon Slaying Story</a>"</li> </ul>	
<b>Friday, March 3</b>	<i>Peer Review</i>	
<b><u>WEEK 9: THE INTERNET &amp; DIGITAL DECLUTTERING</u></b>		
<b><u>Date/Topic</u></b>	<b><u>Readings</u></b>	<b><u>Assignments</u></b>
<b>Monday, March 6</b>	<i>To prepare for class, please read:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roxanne Gay, "<a href="#">When Twitter Does What Journalism Can't</a>"</li> </ul>	<b>Public performance</b>
<b>Wednesday, March 8</b>	<i>To prepare for class, please read:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Dolly Parton Challenge</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Friday, March 10</b>	<i>Public Performances</i>	

<b>WEEK 10: ON REFLECTION</b>		
<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Readings</u></b>	<b><u>Assignments</u></b>
<b>Monday, March 13</b>	<i>Public Performances</i>  Optional reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">“The Danger of Fake Positivity &amp; Spiritual Bypassing”</a></li> </ul>	<b>Public performance Final Reflection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due Friday, 11:59pm</li> </ul>
<b>Wednesday, March 15</b>	<i>Public Performances</i>	
<b>Friday, March 17</b>	<i>Public Performances</i>	

### **COURSE POLICIES:**

**Attendance:** As a small seminar course, attendance and participation in class are essential. You will be graded on both attendance as well as active participation (e.g. being engaged, speaking when appropriate, contributing to the learning environment, etc.). You are allowed 3 excused absences per quarter. Each unexcused absence will lower your course grade by half a letter grade.

**Office Hours Policy:** I highly encourage you to take advantage of my office hours. My door (both physical and virtual) is always open and I am happy to talk to students about a range of topics, not just course-specific issues. I want to help make your experience at UCSD a positive one. If you cannot make my scheduled times or would like to meet in person, please let me know, and we can make an individual appointment.

**Late Work Policy:** 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), submissions will be accepted only on a case-by-case basis and will not receive higher than a 50%. If you are concerned you will miss a deadline, please contact me at least 48 hours before the assignment is due to work out a new deadline. (I will not give extensions retroactively).

**Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism or cheating is a serious offense and will be dealt with following university guidelines. It is your responsibility to become familiar with its policies, definitions, and penalties. These rules apply to exams and papers. If you have any questions about proper conduct, please see me. Do not guess or be uncertain about what constitutes cheating.



Resources and information on academic integrity can be found at <https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/>

Plagiarism and/or cheating will not be tolerated, and at **the very least**, you will receive zero points on the assignment and be reported to the University. Ultimately, you may receive a failing grade in the class and be subject to university discipline.

**The Respect Rule:** I ask you all to show the utmost respect to everyone in the classroom. We all have different backgrounds, values, beliefs, identities, and experiences that may sometimes cause disagreement; but when you are in this class, you are required to demonstrate understanding, respect, and empathy towards your fellow classmates, guest speakers, and instructors.

**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.

**ADA Statement:** 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).

**Transfer Students:** The Triton Transfer Hub is available to meet transfer students' academic, social, and personal needs, including group & individual study space, events, workshops and coaching. Take time to meet with a peer coach and learn a little more about the UCSD culture.

Triton Transfer Hub

[Transferstudents.ucsd.edu](http://Transferstudents.ucsd.edu)

[tritontransfers@ucsd.edu](mailto:tritontransfers@ucsd.edu)

Biomedical Sciences Library (Pepper Canyon Hall – Coming soon!)

**Other Important Policies:** Anyone having problems or challenges related to the course is strongly encouraged to contact me as early as possible. Whether it's challenges with childcare, transportation, housing, work, or anything, I am here to help however I can. **My goal is for you all to succeed!**