

CAT 2CE: Fiction of Psychosocial Experience

Winter 2024

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

Course Days & Times: MWF 9:00am-10:50am (yes, this is a 2 hour class!)

Location: CTL B108 (CAT Lab)

Dr. Popko's Office Hours: MW, 11:00am-12:00pm, and by appointment

Office Location: CTL 160

Email: epopko@ucsd.edu

Course Description

This small, seminar-style course will examine how fiction has and continues to imagine the psychology of the self and society. In a world reeling from any number of local and global tragedies, what can fiction teach us about mental health? How does fiction inform our understanding of the psychological make-up of ourselves and our communities? How might fiction help us achieve and maintain mental wellness? In this class we'll look at a variety of fictional texts, primarily novels and short stories, and how those texts interact with human psychology.

As part of this course, you will be required to participate in a number of experiential opportunities related to mental health and wellness. These experiences may include conducting interviews with local communities, trying various wellness exercises, attending university and local events, and volunteering. You'll be looking at these experiences through the lens of our fiction to analyze the intersection of storytelling and mental health.

Learning Objectives

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

- Practice clear prose that advances the rhetorical purpose and choose a tone that is appropriate to the subject and audience.
- Craft and organize a compelling argument and support it with relevant and carefully-evaluated evidence.
- Synthesize a variety of sources and points of view on a single topic (i.e. in service of an argument).
- Practice proper citation and documentation of sources, including in multimodal assignments.

- Develop an individual writing voice, using revision to hone arguments and reflect on the writing practice.

Specific to CAT 2CE, you should be able to:

- Analyze the world around you, particularly dominant cultural narratives and norms.
- Discover your own intrinsic and personal motivations for learning, thus nurturing your learning beyond college with curiosity and enjoyment.
- Put your knowledge into practice and develop a responsible relationship to your own communities.

Writing/Rhetoric Skills

CAT 2 fosters the following skills:

- Thesis statements
- Recognition and deployment of parts of an argument
- Synthesis of differing viewpoints
- The ability to compare and contrast
- Analysis
- Revision

Core Concepts

By the end of CAT 2, you should be able to understand and define the following terms and ideas:

- Genre and medium/mode
- Interdisciplinarity
- Form and content
- Parts of an argument

Materials

- *They Say, I Say*, CAT 5th Ed.
- *The Memory Police*, Yoko Ogawa
- *Mapping the Interior*, Stephen Graham Jones
- *Binti* (#1 only), Nnedi Okorafor
- Reliable access to Zoom, Canvas, and UCSD email
- A reading journal or notebook

You may purchase the digital/ebook versions of Ogawa, Jones, and/or Okorafor.

Attendance

Enrolling in this course means that you agree to be a part of our specific community for this specific term and next term. Attendance, including arriving on time and staying for the

entirety of class, is a gesture of respect to me, your fellow classmates, and your educational goals. Your attendance is especially critical to this small seminar course. Thus, attendance is required for this class. Absences, late arrivals, and early departures will be noted and affect your participation grade.

However, I understand that life happens! Everyone has two free mental health days for the term. These absences will not affect your participation grade, but you are responsible for following up with classmates regarding what you missed. If you have extenuating circumstances and/or OSD accommodations that would cause you to miss more than two classes, please contact me as soon as possible so we can make appropriate arrangements.

Chronic lateness or continued early departures from class are disruptive. If you are concerned about your ability to arrive on time and stay for the entire class consistently, please contact me as soon as possible.

Technology

I would prefer that our classroom be free from electronic distractions. However, I understand that your course materials may be in digital formats and some of you may have OSD accommodations that require the regular use of technology. So, electronic devices will only be allowed as they apply to class activities or discussions. Otherwise, electronic devices need to be put away in a bag. There may be times when I ask that everyone put devices away for a period of time, which I expect you to respect. Anyone who is found to be using technology may be asked to leave the classroom, and their participation will be affected.

In summary: please be respectful with your use of technology and use it to support your focus on class material, not challenge it.

A Note on 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.

Please note that in this class, we will discuss issues 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) 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's ideas, but do so in a way that respectfully engages the other person's ideas and experiences.

If you are anxious about speaking in class, please let me know ASAP. My 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 literature! 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.

CalFresh & Basic Needs Information

If you are facing food insecurity, we encourage you to contact 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.

CARE at SARC

CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center is the UC San Diego confidential advocacy and education office for sexual violence and gender-based violence (dating violence, domestic violence, stalking). CARE provides violence prevention education for the entire UCSD campus and offers free and confidential services for students, staff and faculty impacted by sexual assault, relationship violence and stalking.

CARE at SARC is on-call 24 hours a day and on weekends throughout the year. If you are in need of urgent support during non-business hours, weekends, or holidays, please call us at (858) 534-5793. <https://care.ucsd.edu/>

Please note that as your instructor, I am considered a “responsible employee,” which means that I am obligated to report any information about sexual harassment, assault, or other forms of discrimination to the university. I am happy for you to confide in me regarding any struggles you may have, but please know that if you disclose abuse, suicidal ideation, harassment, or another reportable offense, I am required by law to report it. CARE is confidential and not obligated to report offenses unless so desired by you.

Assignment Policies

All assignments must be submitted in MLA format, with the exception of screenshots or photographs of notes.

You must complete all primary assignments to pass the course, regardless of numerical grade. Primary assignments include:

- Argument Analyses
- Narrative Analysis
- Comparative Analysis
- Final Portfolio

Assignments are due to Canvas by 11:59pm on the due date. Late assignments may receive penalties, and extensions must be asked for by the day before the due date. Assignments submitted 1 or more weeks late will receive no more than 50% credit.

All assignments should ascribe to [UCSD’s policy of academic integrity](#), as well as the policy set forth in this document.

Academic Integrity Policy

You are expected to do your own writing and thinking without the use of unauthorized assistance. Specifically, this means that you cannot have another student, bot, program, or service compose any part of your assignment (drafts, outlines, revisions, notes, responses,

reflections, peer review, etc.). The previous list is not exclusive, and there may be other entities that are similarly unauthorized. If you find yourself unwilling or unable to complete your work without the use of unauthorized assistance, consider why. I would much rather that you ask for help, accommodation, or support to complete the assignment with integrity. True, I may not know if/when you don't complete your own work. Ultimately, the use of unauthorized assistance will have consequences, some of which may not be immediate. If you are discovered to have used unauthorized assistance on any assignment, you will receive a 0 for that assignment and will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office.

Below are authorized forms of assistance that you may use whenever you need:

- Office hours with Dr. Popko
- Verbal, extemporaneous, unrecorded discussion with classmates or other students outside of class about class material
- Appointments with Writing Hub tutors or attendance at Writing Hub workshops/events
- Appointments with LATS/OASIS tutors or attendance at LATS/OASIS workshops/events
- Informal peer review with other CAT 2CE students
- Any devices, services, or otherwise that are a part of your approved OSD accommodations

If you have any questions about using a specific form of support or assistance, please ask!

Brief Assignment Descriptions & Grade Breakdown

Reading/Reflection Journals (15%)

- Summary of notes you've taken and ideas you've had throughout the week
- 1-3 paragraphs

Argument Analyses (15%)

- Explanation and evaluation of an argument from course reading/speaker
- 1-3 pages

Experiential Activities (10%)

- Participation in 2 of 3 experiential activities
- Submission of notes (photos are fine) and 1 paragraph reflection

Narrative Analysis (15%)

- 3-5 page thesis-driven essay
- Requires a draft, revision, and reflections

Comparative Analysis (20%)

- 3-5 page thesis-driven essay

- Requires a draft, participation in a writing circle, revision, and reflections

Final Portfolio (15%)

- 1-3 page reflection essay
- Copies of writing referenced in reflection essay

Participation (10%)

- Consistent, thoughtful engagement (speaking/listening/group work) during class sessions
- Completion of intro survey & Buckley waiver
- Completion of footnote activity (in class)

For more detailed information on assignments, please refer to the assignment descriptions page in Canvas.

Grading Policies

I grade all assignments on a 10-point scale, with only half point intervals. This means that you can earn a 9 or a 9.5, but not a 9.2.

10/9.5 = Exceptional (A Range)

9/8.5 = Exceeds all expectations (B Range)

8/7.5 = Meets all expectations (C Range)

7/6 = Meets most expectations (D Range)

5 = Does not meet expectations (F)

For the purposes of final course grades, the following ranges will be used:

A+ = 96.6-100

A = 92.6-96.5

A- = 89.6-92.5

B+ = 86.6-89.5

B = 82.6-86.5

B- = 79.6-82.5

C+ = 76.6-79.5

C = 72.6-76.5

C- = 69.6-72.5

D = 59.6-69.5

F = 0-59.5

Keep in mind that if you take this course P/NP, you must earn at least a C-.

Grades will be available 1 week after you submit the assignment. Please wait 24 hours after grades are posted before contesting the grade or requesting a rewrite. All grade contestations and rewrite requests must occur in person and not over email. Regrades and rewrites are uncommon.

Teaching Philosophy and Expectations

I love teaching writing and literature because these topics are unique in that they are both highly independent and highly collaborative experiences. This combination creates complexities that are both difficult and pleasurable. I enjoy helping students navigate these complexities, especially when they make unexpected connections. I believe that teaching and learning are embodied experiences, which means that the mind and intelligence are inseparable from the physical body. So, we might move regularly throughout the classroom, write by hand, or even hold class outside (weather permitting).

I want you to get something out of this class, but what you get is in large part determined by you. If you simply want to pass the class, I'm happy to respect and support that. I don't expect (or want!) you to develop a love for reading, writing, or literature just because I love these things. I want you to have your own goals and a willingness to be pushed. For CAT 2CE, in particular, the value of the course depends on your own internal motivation.

In summary, I've made a list of expectations:

What you can expect of me...

- I will be prepared for class and invested in the material.
- I will be enthusiastic and animated during discussions (probably 95% of the time).
- I will respond to emails within 48 hours.
- I will be as invested in your work as you are.
- I will treat your work with honesty and compassion.
- I will learn your name and as much about you as you'd like to share.
- I will make fun of myself and probably make very cheesy jokes.
- I may curse, but I will try not to.
- I will offer leniency to those who demonstrate engagement and proactivity.
- I will be a safe sounding board for ideas, whether related to your assignments or not.
- I will take earnest feedback about the course seriously.

What I expect of you...

- You will attend class on time and 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 as “best” changes).
- You will do your own work with honesty and integrity.
- You will read the syllabus and refer to it throughout the quarter.
- You will treat your fellow classmates, visiting speakers, and myself with humanity and dignity; you will not engage in racist, sexist, classist, ableist, homophobic, transphobic, ethnocentric, fat-shaming, faith-shaming, or otherwise hateful communication. There is a difference between disrespectful/hateful speech and reasonable disagreement/respectful questions.
- You will speak respectfully to me if you have any problems with the assignments or my teaching methods; you will give me the chance to correct mistakes or address miscommunication.