

Reading in Santa Barbara: Past, Present, and Future

English 197
Spring 2019
M/W 9:30-10:45 am
South Hall 2617

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Office Hours: M/W 11-12
and by appointment

How do we come to be studying literature in a UCSB classroom? What's the difference between why we read at all and why we read in school? In this class, we will consider the historical interactions between reading communities, both inside and outside the university, in order to analyze present relationships between such communities and imagine future reconfigurations. As a class, we will undertake a sustained collaborative research project in Special Collections: a deep engagement with the archives of UCSB's own academic history, examples of student writing through the decades, and records of surrounding literary communities and local institutions. In partnership with UCSB Reads, the main goal of the course will be to curate a student-designed public humanities event (such as an exhibit, a talk, or a performance) around this year's book, Thi Bui's illustrated memoir *The Best We Could Do*. The final showcase will be informed by our archival research and should in some way model or foster the relationships that students want to see between reading communities of different demographics, backgrounds, and ages. In this way, students will be better able to reflect on what it means, has meant, and might mean to be a reader at UCSB.

Required Texts

Our texts this quarter are chosen purposefully to represent two reading programs: UCSB Reads and Santa Barbara Reads.

- ❖ Thi Bui. *The Best We Could Do*. New York: Abrams ComicArts, 2018. (UCSB Reads Book, 2019)
- ❖ Donna Wares, ed. *My California: Journeys by Great Writers*. Angel City Press, 2004. (Santa Barbara Reads Book, 2006)

As part of UCSB Reads, students will receive a free copy of Thi Bui's text. *My California* is available at the UCSB Bookstore. All other readings will be made available in class, in the library, or on Gaucho Space.

Learning Goals

- ❖ Reflect on your own educational experiences at UCSB.
- ❖ Reach a greater understanding of the social power of literature to create a sense of place, initiate and strengthen communities, and also construct barriers between communities.
- ❖ Reach a greater understanding of the historical and current relationships between institutions and reading communities in Santa Barbara, which can contribute to the ability to imagine future relationships.
- ❖ Learn archival methods, event planning skills, and best practices for communicating with an audience in a public humanities setting.

Schedule

Readings and assignments are listed on the day they are due.

Week 1

April 1 – Introductions

April 3 – *The Catalyst*, Issue 11; UCSB Timeline; Caroline Levine, *Forms* (selections)

Week 2

April 8 – **In class: visit from Alex Regan, UCSB Reads** (please come prepared with questions)
Bui, Preface and Chapters 1-2
Reflection 1 due

April 10 – **In class: Special Collections Workshop (meet in Library, 3rd floor Mountainside)**
Bui, Chapter 3; Helena Michie and Robyn Warhol, *Love Among the Archives* (selections), and Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature* (selections)

Week 3

April 15 – Bui, Chapters 4-5
Reflection 2 due

April 17 – Bui, Chapter 6-7; John Guillory, *Cultural Capital* (selections) and Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction* (selections)

Week 4

April 22 – **In class: visit from Jennifer Lemberger, Santa Barbara Public Library** (please come prepared with questions)
Bui, Chapters 8-10
Reflection 3 due

April 24 – **In class: Special Collections Workshop (meet in Library, 3rd floor Mountainside)**
Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (selections), and Stanley Fish, *Is There A Text in This Class?* (selections)

Thursday, April 25: Thi Bui Lecture, 7:30 pm, Campbell Hall; Doors open 6:45. Seating first come, first served.

Week 5

April 29 – Midterm assignment due
(Please turn in on Gaucho Space and bring to class in hard copy)

May 1 – **In class: UCSB Reads event planning!** Bring ideas for brainstorming the format of our event, the relationships that you'd like the event to build (in light of our archival research), and how we might achieve this.
Sarah Hirschman, *People and Stories* (selections), and Kate Flint *The Woman Reader* (selections)

Week 6

May 6 – *My California*, p 7-59
Reflection 4 due

May 8 – **In class: Special Collections Workshop (meet in Library, 3rd floor Mountainside)**
My California, p 61-113; Merve Emre, *Paraliterary* (selections), and Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance* (selections)

Week 7

May 13 – *My California*, p 115-163
Reflection 5 due

May 15 – *My California*, p 165-204; Richard Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy* (selections)

Week 8

May 20 – **In class: Special Collections Workshop (meet in Library, 3rd floor Mountainside)**
Prepare for the class showcase!

May 22 – **UCSB Reads, Class Showcase (Library, Room 1312)**
All are welcome - invite your friends, family, colleagues, teachers, etc!

Week 9

May 27 – Memorial Day, No class

May 29 – *Painted Cave* (literary magazine of Santa Barbara City College); Catherine Robson, *Heart Beats* (selections), and Michael Cohen, *The Social Lives of Poems* (selections)
Reflection 6 due

Week 10

June 3 – *The Catalyst*, Issue 16

June 5 – Final assignment due
(Please upload to Gaucho Space and be ready to present your ideas in class)

Affiliated Projects

This class is affiliated with WhatEvery1Says (WE1S), a Mellon-funded, collaborative project at UC Santa Barbara, CSU Northridge, and the University of Miami that uses digital methods to explore how the humanities have been portrayed in popular media since the 1980s. The project then uses this research to inform humanities advocacy work. Our course intersects with the goals of WE1S in that we are trying to figure out how the humanities might engage new audiences and inspire conversation and connection between reading communities. I am working this year as a postdoctoral scholar for the project and will be posting regular public updates about our course to the WE1S research blog, in my role as the Director of the project's Curriculum Lab. The blog is mainly meant to document my own planning process throughout the class and to maintain a steady dialogue between teaching practice and the project's research goals. My posts are **NOT** meant to report on the performance of individual students.

This course is also part of a series of courses that will form a new project of my own, called "Reading With." The idea behind this project is that we might fill in the blank with any number of audiences: reading with engineers, reading with economists, reading with environmental scientists, reading with policy makers, reading with inner-city communities, etc, etc, etc. I hope that this course can begin a much longer thought process about how books might build bridges between specialized communities otherwise isolated from each other. To this end, I'll be asking for volunteers willing to post some of their finished class assignments to a fledgling website I've created: readingwith.com. (Volunteering or not in no way affects your grade.)

Key links:

<http://we1s.ucsb.edu/>

<http://we1s.ucsb.edu/curriculum-lab/>

<https://www.readingwith.com/>

This course also counts towards the Literature and Culture of Information (LCI) specialization in the English major.

Assignments

Weekly Responses

Minimum 300 words each. Please upload to Gaucho Space by 9:30 am on the due dates listed below.

Reflection 1 (April 8): Reflect on your experience as a reader at UCSB. How would you position yourself within the larger literary landscapes of the University and of Santa Barbara? What communities do you feel connected to through reading? What communities do you not feel a part of? What have you learned through your reading here?

Reflection 2 (April 15): Reflect on an archival object that we've seen in Special Collections. What observations could you make about it? What surprises or confuses you? What questions does the object raise for you and what further research might you undertake to begin answering them?

Reflection 3 (April 22): Respond to *The Best We Could Do*. What relationship do you see between the narrative and the novel's graphic form? What techniques does Bui use to tell her story? What questions might you ask her if you had the chance? What themes and characters do you find most compelling? What sense of community does the novel present?

Reflection 4 (May 6): Put two of our critical texts in conversation with each other. What points of connection and what disagreements do you see between these two theorists? Which of their ideas do you find compelling? Would you offer any critiques or different perspectives?

Reflection 5 (May 13): Respond to *My California*. What sense of community does this text create (structurally, financially, narratively, emotionally)? What perspectives does it provide on California? Do you resonate with the pieces in this text? What specific authors have you found compelling and why? Reflect on the narrative strategies that especially spoke to you. How do you imagine this text fitting into the mission of SB Reads?

Reflection 6 (May 29): Reflect on the UCSB Reads class showcase. What went well? What could be improved next time? Provide feedback and suggestions about the UCSB Reads program in a way that could be presented to the Library, particularly from the angle of creating community through literature.

Midterm assignment

Please upload to Gaucho Space by 9:30 am on April 29 and bring to class in hard copy.

An Archival Graphic Narrative

The goal of this assignment is to tell a story about ourselves and the history of reading at UCSB in a form that builds from Bui's graphic narrative. The first part of this assignment will be a visual memoir: with yourself as the protagonist, present your experience as a reader at UCSB with reference to at least three archival objects we have seen. What was meaningful about your interaction with the archive? How does the history of reading communities in Santa Barbara prompt you to reflect on your own education? How would you position your own experience as a reader in the context of the other readers we've seen this quarter? The presentation should be in the form of a two-page graphic novel spread, inspired by the themes and format of Bui's text. In the second part of the assignment (500 words minimum), reflect on your strategy: how did Bui's text influence you? What elements did you adapt for your own story and how does this process help you to think in a new way about *The Best We Could Do*?

Final assignment

Please upload to Gaucho Space by 9:30 am on June 5 and be prepared to present in class.

The Utopian University

In 8-10 pages, reflect on the relationships that you see between reading communities in Santa Barbara, both historically and currently. Your analysis should bring together all of the elements that we've discussed this quarter: our primary texts, our archival experiences, our critical readings, and our class showcase through UCSB Reads. How do you think literature creates or breaks social bonds? How do you see this social power of literature manifested at UCSB and in the greater Santa Barbara area? How do you see your experience as a reader in conversation with the history of other readers that we've seen this term – whether current or historical, on or off campus – through the archives, through presentations, or through our critical texts? Finally, and most importantly, imagine and describe a utopia. What would be the ideal literary landscape of a city? How would institutions interact with each other? What would be the best way for literary study at a university to connect with other communities of readers (and what current gaps can we address)? How can books best create and foster social relationships?

Extra credit

Attend an event through UCSB Reads or the Public Library system and hand in a 300-word write-up about your experience. Event calendars available here:

UCSB Reads: <http://guides.library.ucsb.edu/c.php?g=859169&p=6155996>

Santa Barbara Public Library system (with events in multiple branch locations):

<https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/depts/lib/events/default.asp>

Late assignments will lose 1/3 of a letter grade per day (A- to B+, eg). You cannot receive full points for an assignment if you do not meet the minimum word count.

With your permission, elements of these assignments may be posted publicly on the Reading With website. You may decline with no negative effect to your grade.

Grading

Your grade will be broken down as follows:

Weekly reflections: 25%

Midterm assignment: 25%

Final assignment: 25%

Participation and Attendance (including UCSB Reads event): 25%

Policies

Contacting me: The best way to speak with me is to attend my office hours. I welcome any and all conversations, questions, thoughts, etc, and I much prefer to speak to you in person. **If you are unable to attend office hours**, I can be reached by email at adroge@ucsb.edu. If you have a question about an assignment, please ask well in advance (at least 48 hours). I will not answer email on the weekends.

Attendance and preparation: Since this is a discussion-based class, it is very important that you come to class prepared, having done the readings and assignments. I expect you to be engaged in class, whether through speaking or active listening. A lot of our work will be collaborative, meaning that your absence will negatively affect peers who are depending on you. Each person's perspective is valuable.

If you must be absent, due to illness, religious observance, or an emergency, please do your best to inform me at least 24 hours in advance. Attendance will be taken at each class session. **Unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade. Attending only 10 or fewer of our class sessions will automatically result in a failing participation grade, unless you have discussed extenuating circumstances with me.**

Electronics: Since many of our texts will be online this quarter, I will trust you to use laptops in class. This is a privilege that, if abused, may be revoked at any time. No cell phones, texting, emailing, Facebook, Instagram, etc.

Discussion and inclusivity: My primary goal in this class is to create a welcoming environment where big ideas can be discussed creatively and openly. It is crucial that we all behave with the utmost respect towards our fellow classmates. **However, this does not mean that we will avoid controversial subjects.** I expect all discussions to be handled with maturity and generosity.

Accessibility

If you need special academic accommodations, please use the UCSB Disabled Students Program (<https://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu/>).

Honor Code

Academic Integrity: Be honest and forthright in your dealings as a student. Students are expected to abide by UCSB policy on academic integrity and dishonesty (<http://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu/academicintegrity.aspx>). Academic dishonesty such as cheating or plagiarism may lead to failing, probation or expulsion.

Course Statement on Plagiarism: Plagiarism includes the failure to acknowledge all secondary sources in your work, passing off another person's work as your own, or re-submitting your own work from another class. Plagiarism can be obvious or subtle, intentional or due to negligence. Be diligent in taking notes on your sources as you read; while writing, cite the source of each

quote or paraphrase you use. When in doubt about how to acknowledge a source, please consult me or a CLAS tutor (<http://clas.sa.ucsb.edu/>). Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course, and may result in disciplinary action, including probation or expulsion.

Studying: Students are encouraged to support one another in discussion groups, note-taking, review sessions, and other collective learning. However, students are forbidden from selling study guides, or from redistributing copyright course material to any person or organization. See UC Policy 102.23: <http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710530/PACAOS-100>

Sexual Violence Prevention and Response

If you are dealing with a difficult situation, please feel welcome to use me as a resource. However, you should be aware up front that I am a “Responsible Employee,” meaning that if you disclose information to me regarding any acts of sexual misconduct affiliated with anyone from UCSB, **I must report it** to the Title IX office. Alternatively, there are many confidential resources on campus that you can use as well, such as:

Campus Advocacy Resources and Education (CARE): <http://wgse.sa.ucsb.edu/Care/>

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): <http://caps.sa.ucsb.edu/>

Office of the Ombuds: <https://ombuds.ucsb.edu/>

24-hour confidential advocate: (805) 893-4613

More information about support and reporting options, including confidential resources, can be found here: <http://sexualviolence.ucsb.edu/get.help/>

You can also find further information on the UC Sexual Violence Prevention and Response website: <http://sexualviolence.universityofcalifornia.edu/index.html>