

Dept. of Literature, Journalism & Modern Languages WRI 3022; section 1 3 Units Fall, 2019

Creative Writing Fiction: Short Story

Meeting days: T/R	Instructor: Breeann Kirby
Meeting times: 9:30am–10:45am	E-mail: bkirby@pointloma.edu
Meeting location: BAC104	Office location: BAC 122
Final Exam: 17DEC 10:30am-1pm	Office hours: Wednesdays, By Appointment

PLNU Mission To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

WRI 3022 FAQ

Please refer to this FAQ whenever you have questions about the course. If you ask a question that is outlined in this FAQ, I will direct you to it.

What am I going to learn in this class?

WRI3022 is an upper division undergraduate creative writing elective you can choose as part of your writing degree (or for fun if you aren't a writing major). This class is a writing class; thus, you will write often and diversely, learning how to go from brainstorming a nascent idea to a final product. As such, you will spend time both in and outside of class reading and writing. Further, you will spend time workshopping each other's drafts which will teach you not only to respond and give outside critique but also to look at yours and others' works with an eye for grammar, narrative clarity, aesthetics, entertainment, and inspiration. Finally, good writers are good readers; though we have two books that will cover the mechanics of writing and the creative life, we will also read various stories that implement these craft techniques.

The PLNU catalog states that WRI3022 is

Comprehensive instruction and guided workshop in writing fiction. Attention is also given to methodology in teaching fiction writing and to finding publication. May be repeated once for major credit with instructor's consent.

The Writing Program Learning Outcomes are as follows:

- 1. apply artistry and advanced skills in various forms and genres of writing;
- 2. demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and terminology of various forms and genres of writing;
- 3. engage in writing and editorial processes in a professional environment;
- 4. present written work to live audiences, demonstrating strategies for audience engagement and oral communication.

During the course of the semester, we will touch on aspects of all five of these outcomes. The specific **Course Outcomes** are as follows:

- 1. Gain a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity.
- 2. Develop creative capacities.
- 3. Develop in expressing yourself orally or in writing.
- 4. Develop specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course.

Where do I have to spend my money for this class?

1. Burroway, Janet Writing Fiction

ISBN: 9780226616698

2. Shawl, Nisi and Cynthia Ward Writing the Other

ISBN: 9781933500003

- 3. Printouts from Canvas as well as your essays—plan accordingly (about \$50-\$100)
 - a. You will make copies of your three short stories for the class to workshop
 - b. Part of your grade will be printing out some short stories on Canvas, annotating them, and contributing to class discussion;
- 4. Pocket folder (not a three-ring binder) to turn in your work;
- 5. Various office supplies (lined paper, highlighters, pens, stapler, Scotch tape);
- 6. (Optional) Another writing craft book from an approved list;
- 7. (Optional) Notebook/Journal for in-class free writing.

**In the interest of lightening the financial burden of college education, I have placed our additional readings on Canvas rather than constructing a course reader. You must read this material before our class meeting AND either bring a printout of the pages or a NON CELL PHONE device to read them on. If you do not, I will sweetly ask you to leave class to retrieve the materials (including books on the days we read those). Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. However, any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

Are there any resources I can use online and/or on campus to help me?

Yes. The following are a few of my favorites.

The Writers' Studio is located in Bond Academic, room 159 http://www.pointloma.edu/experience/academics/schools-departments/department-literature-journalism-modern-languages/writers-studio.

The Library has not only many books but also databases that allow you to do specific searches for any topic you want. Further, it also contains very helpful librarians who can assist you.

Canvas will contain this syllabus, the assignments, some readings, and other fun sundries throughout the semester. Sometimes you might have to print them for class. Please check Canvas regularly.

OneLook is an online database of dictionaries <u>www.onelook.com</u>.

Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia <u>www.wikipedia.org</u>. Though this site can have errors from time to time, it is a wonderful place to look up any person, place, or event you encounter in your reading that you do not know.

Me I am available to answer any questions you may have. Tell me when you need to see me in class or email me. Please include "WRI 3022" in the subject line of our email. If you do not, I will remind you to do so before addressing your question.

What do I have to do to pass this class¹?

- 1. Come to class
- 2. Do all the assignments

ALL assignments are due in PAPER copy the day of class unless you are specifically directed otherwise.

3. Turn them in on time

Reading Log/Exploratory Journal (10%): You will carefully read (and annotate) every text assigned for this course, completing a reading log entry for each day's assigned entry. Also, in this journal, you will keep all of your free-writing to the prompts that I will give you each class.

Portfolio of Writing (35%): This will be a collection of what you have written over the semester (you will keep it in the pocket folder you had to buy). Keep everything unless told not to. The Portfolio will contain:

Three short stories: Over the course of the semester, you will write three original short stories of 1200 - 2500 words.

*/**Revised short story $(+3\%)^2$: This will be a revision of a short story of your choice. Copies of your responses to your peers' stories: These will be 250-400 words each. You should have about 21 (three for each classmate) of these by the end of the semester.

Reading Log/Exploratory Journal

Workshop (25%): We will do workshops as a whole class throughout the semester. You will be responsible for printing copies of your own stories for everyone in the class, including me (about 9). During workshops, we will thoroughly read, mark up, and discuss your stories. Your workshop grade will be based on your written critiques as well as active participation and engagement with your peers' works.

Further Disclaimer: You must avoid typos in your papers. Typos indicate to me that you are being too lazy to proof your text before you turn it in and that you believe your peers enjoy wasting their time with unreadable papers. Typos include but are not limited to spelling errors, misuse or nonuse of capitalization, fragments, or incorrect punctuation. Because no one is a perfect proofreader, I will allow one typo every page (meaning if you have a five page paper, you may have up to five typos total on any of the pages in that work).

¹ Disclaimer: This class requires **a lot of reading and writing**. ALL submissions done outside of class must be free of grammatical errors, typed, and double spaced. I will note work that does not meet these standards; you will have the opportunity this semester to revise ONE assignment of your choice to meet B or above standards. I will often communicate with you via email and/or Canvas to tell you about changes or other assignments.

² * and ** denote B- and A-level work, respectively.

Final Exam (5%): For your final, you will give a practiced, polished reading of a story from your Portfolio. You will be graded on the quality of your introduction to and delivery of the story. Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. The final examination schedule is posted on the <u>Class Schedules</u> site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

*B-Projects (each worth 5%):

*Lead Class Discussion: Some of you may choose to lead the class in discussing one of the fiction stories we will read, connecting to the principles of writing covered in Burroway's or Shawl/Ward's texts. If you do, you will place these notes in your portfolio.

*Three Journals for Publication: Browse the lists of literary journals on www.pw.org. Visit some journals' websites, read sample stories, and look at their submission guidelines. Choose three journals that seem to fit your own or a classmate's aesthetic. On presentation day, come to class prepared to give a short talk about each journal you've chosen. Your presentation should include a handout that gives your classmates an overview of each magazine's aesthetic (including preferred writing styles), masthead (relevant editors), past writers of note (if any), submission guidelines, web address, and contact info. This may be a print journal or an online journal.

*Present Writing Craft Book: From a list I've compiled, you will choose, read, and then present to the class another book on the writing craft.

*/**Attend a Literary Event (5%): Writing events go on frequently at PLNU and in our larger San Diego community. Attend an author lecture, reading, or workshop and write a 1-2 page critical analysis and reflection over what was said and how you can apply it to your reading and/or writing of literature. Due within one week of the event.

**A-Projects (each worth 7%):

**Daily Pages: For one month (31 days) you will write three pages or 750 words daily. These are free-writes to clear the "junk" out of your head; you can use it work on ideas, vent, meditate, whatever you want. I will not read them. It is the practice and act of writing that matters. I suggest you try www.750words.com as your way to accomplish this assignment (you get one month free). Each week, you will send me a screen shot of the diagnostic page that shows completed days or show me your numbered handwritten pages.

**Journal Submission: On the final day of class, you will bring one complete literary journal submission that we will mail together (or give me evidence of online submission before our final meeting). I will give you instructions and advice on cover letters/emails and other technical details of submissions later in the semester. For now, concern yourself with writing and revising to make your stories as good as they can be.

**Present on a Published Writer: Find a published writer whose style is similar to yours. Read some of his/her work. Present to the class the strategies the writer employs that makes his/her work similar to yours, the sort of craft he/she employs, and ways you can "steal" from their work to better your own writing.

^{*}For all of these assignments, further instructions will be given on Canvas and/or in class*

Will I be required to attend and participate in class?

Yes. Because writing is a process, you must engage in that process to get anything out of it; meaning, you must interact with the instructor and the other students *every* class session. You must talk and offer considered feedback in workshops to participate. If you wish to earn your participation grade, you must have a good attitude; you must read all of the readings; and you must speak out. Make it your goal to come up with one good thought for every class and to share it. By doing so, you will be prepared for any reading quizzes I will give. Also, you must turn off your cellphones when you enter the classroom; use of cellphones will not be permitted unless you have an academic accommodation OR I give you specific permission. Other electronic reading devices are allowed on days we do pieces from the course reader; however, if you use your device to disengage from class discussion, I will sweetly ask you to leave the classroom that day and try again next time.

Much of the work we will do in this class is cooperative. You should think of all your writing and speaking for and in class as public, not private, discourse. By continuing in this class, you acknowledge that your work will be viewed by others in the class.

Respect in class is a must. This classroom is a safe space. As we discuss and analyze works that may address potentially emotional topics, we will encounter many different viewpoints within the class. In order to be a good participant in this class, you must be sensitive to your fellow learners. As we share ideas, personal insults and comments will not be tolerated. I will ask you to leave if you cannot be kind. If you aren't sure how to phrase your opinion, please ask me. The best rule to follow: be kind.

A lot of class discussion seems to come from our outside experiences and opinions, do I need to take notes?

Absolutely. Note taking is a valuable skill in every discipline and should be practiced whenever possible. Sometimes I may SPEAK information in class that is important. It is your responsibility as an active class participant to take notes. I often will use class discussion as a place to clarify how to do a certain assignment. This discussion may not appear on Canvas or a PowerPoint presentation. Further, I like to toss in quiz and midterm questions that come from class discussion. Thus, your taking good notes is important for your success in the class.

How will I know what to do and what my grade is?

Because writing is a process, I want you to be able to engage in your work, taking the tools you learn from each piece you produce into the next without worrying about how many points you might lose on an individual assignment. To eliminate grade anxiety, I've set this course up on a contract grading model. This model means that you can choose which grade you would like to earn right now at the beginning of the semester and then allocate your time wisely to earning that grade. Though you will not get an individual score on your papers nor will I post grades on Canvas, I will let you know if you do not meet or exceed the requirements for the grade you are working to earn.

I will not accept work that is unfocused and rife with grammatical and logical errors and typos. If you happen to turn in an essay that appears to be the product of lazy engagement with the writing, you risk not meeting the conditions of our grade contract. I will give you an opportunity to revise ONE assignment (not counting the final short story) of your choice this semester. I

assume that none of you want a grade of D or F; if you are interested in a grade lower than a C, please meet with me to discuss your options.

70-79%: C

To earn a C grade in this class, you will:

- 1. Keep a reading log/exploratory journal (10%);
- 2. Contribute to class discussion every class;
- 4. Miss no more than 2 classes this semester;
- 5. Come to class on time;
- 6. Read your peers' work and write a 250-400 word response for each (15% of portfolio grade);
- 7. Actively participate in workshops, leading three (25%);
- 8. Write three original short stories (1200-2500 words each) (15% of portfolio grade);
- 10. Participate in a reading of your revised work (Final Exam) (5%);
- 11. Submit a portfolio that contains all your written work over the semester (35%).

I will not accept work that does not meet with the quality expected of a C. If you do not do C-quality work, then I will not accept it. The fluctuation in the percentage allows that there can be variable effort and quality put in at the C level. Thus you can earn a C- or a C+.

80-89%: B

To earn a B grade in this class, you will do all of the above C assignments (75%), included a revised short story in your portfolio (3%), attend one literary event (5%) in the semester, providing a 500-word response to it, as well as choose one of the assignments (5%) below.

- **B1**. Lead class discussion on one of the short stories that we have read in the class, connecting it to principles in the craft books we are reading as well;
- **B2.** Present a list of 3 journals/magazines that would be fitting for you to publish one of your stories in, providing a sheet for the class that lists submission requirements for each publication;
- **B3.** Choose one of the craft books below (or propose one to me), read it, and present on it in class.

Bird by Bird Anne Lamott
On Writing Steven King
The War of Art Steven Pressfield
The Writing Life Annie Dillard
Walking on Water Madeleine L'Engle
How to Write Bestselling Fiction Dean Koontz
On Writing Well William Zinsser
Writing Down the Bones Natalie Goldberg
Telling True Stories Mark Kramer
The New New Journalism Robert Boynton
The Writer's Journey Christopher Vogler
Burning Down the House Charles Baxter
The Art of Fiction John Gardner
On Becoming a Novelist John Gardner
The Story Grid Shawn Coyne

I will not accept work that does not meet with the quality expected of a B. If you do not do B-quality work, then I will not accept it. The fluctuation in the percentage allows that there can be variable effort and quality put in at the B level. Thus you can earn a B- or a B+.

90-100%: A

To earn an A grade in this class you will do all of the C assignments (75%), included a revised short story in your portfolio (3%), attend one literary event this semester (5%), providing a 500-word response to it, two B assignments (10%), and one of the A assignments (7%) below:

- **A1.** Write 750 words a day for a month (31 days);
- A2. Actually submit one of your short stories to a journal or a contest;
- **A3.** Find a published writer who writes similarly to you. Read some of his/her work. Present to the class the things this writer does that makes his/her work similar to yours, what sort of craft does he/she employ, and ways you can "steal" from his/her methods to make your writing better.

I will not accept work that does not meet with the quality expected of a A. If you do not do A-quality work, then I will not accept it. The fluctuation in the percentage allows that there can be variable effort and quality put in at the A level. Thus you can earn an A- or an A (sorry there are no A+s).

It's halfway through the semester, and I haven't had any emails from you about my grade. How will I know if I am awesome? Should I be nervous?

First, you are awesome! Never doubt that. Your grades do not make you an awesome person; how you engage in life does. But I know we all care about grades, so second, if you are doing the assignments according to one of the contracts listed above and you have not heard from me about them, it means that you are doing a great job and are on track for your contracted grade. The only time I will initiate contact about your grade is if you are NOT meeting your contract. However, you are always welcome to ask me about your grade or performance in class at any time in the semester.

What if I turn in a late assignment?

The class is designed so that you are doing consistent work throughout the semester. Officially, I do not accept late work; if you do miss an assignment, we will need to meet to discuss your contract. I do know that sometimes life happens and we miss deadlines. Come talk to me if you know that you miss an assignment ahead of time OR contact me immediately if you do miss one. Remember to put "WRI 3022" in the subject line of your email or I will sweetly request that you do so before addressing your concerns.

What if I have to miss a class?

You must attend class to pass the class. However, I do understand that emergencies do come up. If you do choose to miss class, you are responsible for the material covered and assignments given. You must get this information from another student (not your instructor). Lecture information is a privilege for those students who choose to come to class. They may decide to share that information with you if you ask nicely. Also, you must be prepared for the next class you attend. "I didn't know what to do because I missed last class" is not an acceptable excuse.

As PLNU notes,

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See <u>Academic Policies</u> in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

You may be absent 2 class sessions without question. Wise students will not use up allowable absences early-on for fickle purposes, however. A total of 4 absences may result in failure of the course. Three times of arriving late or exiting class early will equal one absence. You should not depend on doctors' or deans' excuses to bail you out. The built-in allowances are there to cover such needs, so plan carefully and do not use up your allowed absences early in the quad. **Please talk to me and e-mail me about extended illness, emergencies and absence for official university business.** Students in traveling groups that **represent the university** should meet with me during the first week of classes to review the group's travel schedule and its impact in WRI 3022. Students who are absent from 6 class sessions within the first 5 weeks (without legitimate reasons communicated promptly to the professor via e-mail) should expect to be automatically and officially de-enrolled from the course. I warn students via e-mail of impending de-enrollment after 5 absences.

*****The one exception to allowable misses is our workshop days. If you are absent the days we workshop, you risk voiding our contracted grade. Please schedule your semester accordingly.****

Distracting and disruptive behavior will be considered an absence. Using your cell phone in class without permission and/or using your electronic reading device to disengage from our class discussion will be considered an absence.

What if I want to use other people's writing in my writing?

As Solomon wisely noted, "There is nothing new under the sun." And in the spirit of T.S. Eliot and Steve Jobs, we are going to "steal like an artist." So in fiction writing, there is a seeming contraction in what constitutes plagiarism, especially if we look at books like Cathy Acker's *Empire of the Senseless* which reproduces entire sections of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* or cases of fan fiction that build off another person's world building and characters. Writing is often collaborative, and writers share and borrow from each other all the time (just as I did from other PLNU faculty when I wrote this syllabus). *There are ways to do this that are acceptable, but there are also ways to use other people's ideas or words in a way that is considered cheating/plagiarism.* We will discuss this idea of fair use (an actual legal term) and plagiarism further in class. The rule of thumb here is that if you are not creating something new, then you are stealing. Stealing someone else's work will void our grading contract.

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. As explained in the University Catalog, academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. Violations of academic honesty include cheating, plagiarism, falsification, aiding academic dishonesty, and malicious interference. A faculty member who believes a

situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for a) that particular assignment or examination, and/or b) the course following the procedure in the university catalog. A student remains responsible for the academic honesty of work submitted in PLNU courses and the consequences of academic dishonesty beyond receipt of the final grade in the class and beyond the awarding of the diploma. Ignorance of these catalog policies will not be considered a valid excuse or defense. Students may not withdraw from a course as a response to a consequence. Students may appeal using the procedure in the university catalog.

See Academic Policies for further information.

If you aren't sure if you are plagiarizing (you sweet, naïve thing), check out the information on the university cheating and plagiarism policy at http://catalog.pointloma.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=864

Or you can visit PLNU's library which also has an excellent tutorial on how to avoid plagiarism.

Finally, you can always talk to me.

Will you assign extra credit?

During a given semester, opportunities for extra credit may arise. These assignments are often difficult. These tasks give you *extra* points to boost your contracted grade to a +; therefore, they require *extra* effort.

How do I contact you?

At the top of the syllabus, all of my contact information is listed. In the subject line of your email, please indicate "WRI 3022." If you don't, I will sweetly remind you to format your email correctly.

What if I need some extra help in your class?

While all students are expected to meet the minimum standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may require academic adjustments, modifications or auxiliary aids/services. At Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU), these students are requested to register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. (DRC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). The DRC's policies and procedures for assisting such students in the development of an appropriate academic adjustment plan (AP) allows PLNU to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Section 504 (a) prohibits discrimination against students with special needs and guarantees all qualified students equal access to and benefits of PLNU programs and activities. After the student files the required documentation, the DRC, in conjunction with the student, will develop an AP to meet that student's specific learning needs. The DRC will thereafter email the student's AP to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester. The AP must be implemented in all such courses.

If students do not wish to avail themselves of some or all of the elements of their AP in a particular course, it is the responsibility of those students to notify their professor in that course. PLNU highly recommends that DRC students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester about the applicability of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not desire to take advantage of some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

Also, come see me if you think you may need some extra assistance in passing this class.

A	93-100 Percent
A-	90-92
B+	89-88
В	87-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-78
C	77-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-68
D	67-63
D-	62-60
F	Below 60

This syllabus is a contract. If you continue in this course, then you agree to comply with the class policies as stated here.

Schedule

(*Subject to Change as needed to facilitate course goals*)3:

Readings and assignments are due on the date listed.

WF denotes readings from Writing Fiction.

WtO denotes readings from Writing the Other

(Canvas) denotes readings can be found on Canvas in PAGES section

Week 1

5 September Syllabus/Getting to Know You

Week 2

10 September	WF CH 1 – Whatever Works: 1 - 21
	Charters "The Elements of Fiction" (Canvas)
12 September	WF CH 9 – Play It Again: 201 - 211
	Le Guin Steering the Craft "Appendix: The Peer Group Workshop": 127

– 135 (Canvas)Short Story Handout

Week 3

17 September	WF CH 2 – Seeing is Believing: 22 - 43
19 September	Carver "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love" (Canvas)

Week 4

24 September	WF CH 3 – Building Character: 44 - 74
26 September	Bisson "They're Made Out of Meat" (Canvas)
	DUE: Short Story 1 (make copies for everyone in class, including me)

Week 5

1 October	Workshop 1; Group 1
3 October	Workshop 1; Group 2

Week 6

8 October	WtO: 1-46
10 October	<i>WtO</i> : 47 – 66; 85 - 97

Week 7

15 October	Russell "The New Veterans" (Canvas)
17 October	WF CH 4 – The Flesh Made Word: 75 - 100

Disclaimer: This class is taught at the college level; therefore, reading materials may be adult and/or controversial in connotation and/or denotation. The purpose of presenting such material is to expose you to various viewpoints—viewpoints that will act as sources for discussions. For this reason, no alternate materials will be provided.

Final Disclaimer: You will write A LOT. Writing is a muscle that must be exercised.

³ I reserve the right to change the syllabus as needed to facilitate our course goals. You will receive notification of these changes; after which time, you are responsible for required material.

Week 8

22 October *WF* CH 5 – Long Ago and Far Away: 101 - 123

24 October Fowler "Pelican Bar" (Canvas)

DUE: Short Story 2 (make copies for everyone in class)

Week 9

29 October Workshop 2; Group 1 31 October Workshop 2; Group 2

Week 10

5 November WF CH 6 – The Tower and the Net: 124 - 152

7 **November** Chiang "Story of Your Life" (Canvas)

Week 11

12 November *WF* CH 7 – Call Me Ishmael: 153 - 179

14 November Yu "The Man Who Became Himself" (Canvas)

Week 12

19 November *WF* CH 8 – Is and Is Not: 180 - 200

21 November Paz "My Life with the Wave" (Canvas)

DUE: Short Story 3 (make copies for everyone in class)

Week 13

26 November WF CH 9 – Play It Again: 211 - 223 28 November NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)

Week 14

3 December Workshop 3; Group 1

DUE: Informal Proposal of A- or B-Projects

5 December Workshop 3; Group 2

Week 15

10 December Presentations for A- and B-Projects12 December Presentations for A- and B-Projects

Week 16 FINALS WEEK

17 **December** Final Exam – Reading and Celebration of Work (10:30am – 1pm)

DUE: Portfolio of Work