

# WRI 2020 – Intro to Creative Writing

## Fall Semester 2022

### Course Policies

Section 1 (TR 9:30AM-10:45AM, BAC 156)  
3 Units / LJWL Department

**Professor:** *Robbie Maakestad*  
**Office:** *Bond Academic Center, 119*  
**Office Hours:** *[By appointment:  
M/W/F 9-12pm and T/TH 11-12PM]*

**LJWL Office:** *Bond Academic Center*  
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#### 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.

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course serves as a general introduction and overview of creative writing.

In order to create an introduction to the craft, terminology, and techniques of creative writing, we will pursue these learning goals:

1. Further our knowledge of both the craft and art of creative writing.
2. Gain an understanding of and learn to apply general writing craft elements such as point of view, voice, story arc, dialogue, description, and scene/summary.
3. Grow in our knowledge of genre: creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry.
4. Endeavor to explain how written work affects both readers and writers. By studying literature as a writer – considering it as a craft as well as an art – we will come to a better understanding of what goes into creation of that literature.
5. Work together in small-group workshops, and individually after those workshops, in order to explore and practice the discipline of revision.

Together, these learning goals allow us to see writing as a process of art, craft, and discipline, which will benefit not just our ability to write creatively in this course, but also our ability to meet the creative and critical demands required of us in the future.

## ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Each of you will be responsible for preliminary drafts of writing assignments, written critiques of classmates' work, various reading and writing exercises that will aid our understanding of the discipline and craft of creative writing, and four finished writing projects (along with four critical analyses): a submission in each of the three genres (fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry) and one final revision project (your choice). Class time will be divided accordingly: lecture and discussion, small group discussion, in-class writing, and small group and whole-class workshops.

Major assignments:

- Fiction Project – 100 points (Grade to be kept only if your final project is NOT fiction) + 50 points Critical Analysis
  - Creative Nonfiction Project – 100 points (Grade to be kept only if your final project is NOT nonfiction) + 50 points Critical Analysis
  - Poetry Project – 100 points (Grade to be kept only if your final project is NOT poetry) + 50 points Critical Analysis
  - Lit. Journal Presentation and Paper – 100 points (50 points per component)
  - Craft Moves – 190 points (10 points per day)
  - Writing Event Reflection – 55 points
  - Workshops and Critique Letters – 105 points (Workshops and Critique Letters = 15 points/day)
  - Radical Revision Final Project – 100 points (these 100 points also replace one provisional creative project grade as noted above); 50 points Critical Analysis
- TOTAL = 1000 points**

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Burroway, Janet. *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Longman, 2014. ISBN: 9780134053240.

## GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

### RESPECT

Respect for other students and your instructor in our classroom is essential to a healthy classroom dynamic. We may discuss ideas and concepts that challenge your current thinking, so we all must respect one another and be open to new ideas. Show courtesy to other students and your instructor.

### CANVAS

Throughout this course, students will be required to utilize Canvas to receive course grades and access any changes to the *Course Schedule* throughout the semester. If the *Course Schedule* is updated, students will be notified well in advance, but will need to download the updated schedule which the instructor will post on Canvas.

### PLNU EMAIL

Students must regularly check their PLNU email account for updates on assignments and scheduling.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

You will be expected to refrain from using cell phones or other communication devices in the classroom. Use of iPads and laptops should be limited to times when I ask you to pull out your computers for in class use and in-class writing. Even if it seems that it isn't "bothering anyone," checking your e-mail, your Facebook, or surfing the web during class is rude to your instructor and fellow classmates and will count against your participation grade. I expect you to be an engaged member of the class.

## **ATTENDANCE & CRAFT MOVES**

In order to learn most affectively and get as much as you can out of this course, in addition to your participation grade, I expect regular attendance. Let me know if you do have to miss a class, and we can work something out. **Attendance is required for workshops. Absences on such days will hurt your workshop grade.** Missed in-class work may not be made up. It is also your responsibility to get workshop drafts to and from those in your group. Craft moves are worth 190 points, and should be turned in each class period when readings have been assigned.

## **WORKSHOP**

Workshop participation and attendance is mandatory and is worth 15 points per class period. Throughout the semester we will be reading and critiquing one another's essays in small groups and as a whole class. You will turn in a typed copy of your critique to me, as well as to the member of your group who is being workshopped (this will affect your participation/workshop grades). Workshop is not a time to disparage or rudely comment on the work of others. Written critiques balance positive and critical comments, though criticism should certainly be constructive and focused on the writing, not on the writer or the writer's ability. If there are problems with feedback you receive, do not hesitate to contact me. Workshop should be a safe space where we work together to better one another's writing; thus, the amount of effort you put into commenting on the work of others should be just as much as you put into producing your own work. See above for workshop grade specifics.

## **TURNING IN ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES**

All **major assignments and workshop drafts** must be printed out and turned in hard-copy during the class period on the day they are due, in addition to being turned in on Canvas. Assigned work will have a due date and you will be expected to meet this requirement. Missed in-class work may not be made up unless you have an excused absence. I will accept the major projects one class period late, but your paper will be penalized one letter grade (A → B as maximum grade). Major projects turned in after that point will receive a score of 0. You must turn in all four major projects to pass this course. Failure to do so will result in a grade of F.

## **SUBJECT MATTER**

This course will ask you to write whatever you want to write about, but do recognize that there is a line between what is appropriate and not appropriate in a classroom setting, especially with regard to what is being shared with your classmates, who may not share your values. I respect your privacy and truly believe that this class should allow you creative freedom, so all I will ask

is that you use common sense with regard to what is/is not appropriate to write in an academic setting. If you are unsure/nervous or have a hunch that something might be questionable, please discuss your ideas with me in advance of bringing them to workshop.

### **[ONLY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES MAJORS]**

At least one of your creative projects this semester needs to connect topically to environmental concerns.

### **PREPARATION**

You will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss readings, share your work, share your craft moves, and comment on other students' work. Being prepared for each class is vital in creating a classroom that is conducive to learning—take notes on the assigned readings as this allows you to remember the material more fully. Back up your written work as you're responsible for turning work in on the due dates. You are also expected to regularly check your PLNU email for updates to the schedule and assignments.

### **PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY**

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. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. 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. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

### **GRADING RATIONALE**

Creative writing is both an art and a craft. While it is debated by many whether art can be graded, craft can be evaluated. In particular I will look for:

- Adherence to and mastery of CNF conventions
- Structure and form as they pertain to CNF subgenre and subject
- Masterful use of narrative voice and point of view
- Engaging employment of language
- Excellence of writing mechanics
- Improvement through revision
- Creativity and innovation within genre conventions

While the above concerns creative work produced in this course, each creative assignment also requires a Critical Analysis component in which you as the artist will critique the decisions that went into your own work, and connect craft decisions you made with those used by the writers

of our course readings. These Critical Analyses will be graded not as creative work, but upon the clarity and thoughtfulness of the analysis you craft.

### **FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY**

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class Schedules](#) site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

For this course, the final will be an in-class reading from your final project during the final exam. Our scheduled final exam time is **Thursday, December 15, 10:30am-1:00pm**. Since the final is a class activity, it cannot be rescheduled, so make sure that you will be able to attend.

### **LETTER GRADE GUIDELINES**

		920 - 1000 points	A	900 - 919 points	A-
880 - 899 points	B+	820 - 879 points	B	800 - 819 points	B-
780 - 799 points	C+	720 - 779 points	C	700 - 719 points	C-
680 - 699 points	D+	620 - 679 points	D	600 - 619 points	D-

### **SPIRITUAL CARE**

PLNU strives to be a place where students grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith. If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain, or if you have prayer requests, you can contact the [Office of Student Life and Formation](#).

### **PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY**

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center ([EAC@pointloma.edu](mailto:EAC@pointloma.edu) or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan ("AP") to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course. Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

### **PERSONAL NEEDS**

Counseling is available in the Wellness Center for undergraduate students at PLNU. They are open Monday through Friday during the academic school year to offer morning, afternoon, and evening appointments. Please call (619) 849-2574 to schedule a counseling appointment.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 **Course Introduction and Intro to Creative Nonfiction (CNF)**

08/30 – **No Class. Monday classes on Tuesday.**

09/01 – In Class: Syllabus; Art and Craft.

Week 2 **Fundamentals of CNF and Voice in CNF**

09/06 – In Class: Fundamentals of Creative Writing Overview

Readings Due:

“Creative Nonfiction” pgs. 225-236

“The Book of My Life” – Alexander Hemon, pgs. 109-111

[*Canvas*]:

“Tigers” – Eliot Weinberger

09/08 – In Class: Voice in Creative Nonfiction; Project 1 Overview; Lit Journal Project Overview

Readings Due:

“Voice” pgs. 47-61

“Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self” – Alice Walker, pgs. 62-67

[*Canvas*]:

“Track Changes in English” – Kenneth Lee

Week 3 **Point of View/I & Eye and Personal Essays & Humor Writing**

09/13 – In Class: Point of View/I & Eye

Readings Due:

“Me vs. Animals” – Benjamin Percy, pgs. 112-117

“Do He Have Your Number, Mr. Jeffrey?” – Gayle Pemberton, pgs. 237-245

**\*\*\*09/14 – WRITING EVENT: Book Release Celebration w/ Dr. Katie Manning, Dr. Margarita Pintado, and Emma McCoy (senior lit major)—4:30-5:30pm @ Colt Hall**

09/15 – In Class: **Rajpreet Heir visit**, Personal Essays & Humor Writing

Readings Due:

[*Canvas*]:

“An Indian in Yoga Class” – Rajpreet Heir

“The Wishbone” – Harrison Scott Key

“A Scientific Analysis of Disney Movie Sidekicks Through The Lens Of Hip Hop” – Hanif Abdurraqib

Week 4 **Research and Image in CNF**

09/20 – In Class: Researched Essays; Discuss Workshop Procedure

Readings Due:

“The Female Body” – Margaret Atwood, pgs. 245-247

[*Canvas*]:  
“Jumbo II” – Elena Passarello

09/22 – In Class: Concrete vs. Abstract Images  
Readings Due:  
“Image” pgs. 15-27  
“Heaven and Earth in Jest” – Annie Dillard, pgs. 28-29  
“Standing By” – David Sedaris, pgs. 29-33  
“At the Dam” – Joan Didion, pgs. 148-150  
**Group A Nonfiction Drafts Due**

Week 5 **Structure in CNF and Workshop**

09/27 – In Class: Structure in CNF  
Readings Due:  
[*Canvas*]:  
“Time and Distance Overcome” – Eula Biss  
“Capturing Dementia’s Voice: Postwar Memories Under Siege” – Liesel  
Hamilton  
**Group B Nonfiction Drafts Due**

09/29 – **Workshop Group A—Attendance Required**  
**Group A Critique Letters Due**

Week 6 **Workshop, Poetry Day, and Intro to Fiction**

10/04 – **Group B Workshop—Attendance Required**  
**Group B Critique Letters Due**

10/06 – **WRITING EVENT: POETRY DAY w/ Jen Grace Stewart:**  
Workshop and Q&A 11:00am, Fermanian  
Reading and Q&A 4:30pm, ARC  
In Class: **Eddie Matthews visit**, Introduction to Fiction; Project 2  
Overview  
Readings Due:  
“Fiction” pgs. 259-270  
“Incarnations of Burned Children” – David Foster Wallace, pgs. 179-181  
[*Canvas*]:  
“Night After Night” – Eddie Matthews  
**Project 1—Creative Nonfiction Due**

Week 7 **Character and Voice in Fiction and Fiction Event**

10/11 – In Class: Character in Fiction  
Readings Due:  
“Character” pgs. 94-109  
[*Canvas*]:  
“Hills Like White Elephants” – Ernest Hemingway  
“I Help You” – Vonetta Young

10/13 – In Class: Voice in Fiction  
Readings Due:  
“Voice” pgs. 47-61 (review)  
“Victory Lap” – George Saunders, pgs. 69-82  
“The School” – Donald Barthelme, pgs. 150-153  
[Canvas]:  
“Tepeyac” – Sandra Cisneros

\*\*\*Friday 10/14 **WRITING EVENT: Interview w/ fiction writer Chitra Divakaruni:**  
Read excerpt posted to Canvas  
Attend interview: 1:30pm, location tbd

Week 8 **Story and Setting in Fiction**

10/18 – In Class: Story in Fiction  
Readings Due:  
“Story” pgs. 166-175  
“The Werewolf” – Angela Carter, pgs. 153-154  
“Bigfoot Stole My Wife” – Ron Carlson, pgs. 290-294  
[Canvas]:  
“Daddy” – Aaron Housholder

10/20 – In Class: **Breeann Kirby visit:** Fictional Setting  
Readings Due:  
[Canvas]:  
Setting excerpt from *Writing Fiction* by Janet Burroway

Week 9 **Image in Fiction**

10/25 – NO CLASS: Writing day on your own

10/27 – In Class: Image in Fiction  
Readings Due:  
“Image” pgs. 15-27 (review)  
“Bullet in the Brain” – Tobias Woolf, pgs. 34-37  
“Girl” – Jamaica Kincaid, pgs. 38-39  
**Group A & B Fiction Workshop Drafts Due**

Week 10 **Workshop and Poetry on Point**

11/01 – **Workshop Group A—Attendance Required**  
**Group A Critique Letters Due**  
**Book Release Celebration** w/ Eddie Matthews (former WRI major)—time tbd @ Point Loma Assembly Hall

\*\*\*\*11/02 – **WRITING EVENT:** Poetry on Point: 4:30-5:30pm, Colt Hall

11/03 – **Group B Workshop—Attendance Required**  
**Group B Critique Letters Due**

Week 11 **Introduction to Poetry and Setting & Story in Poetry**

11/08 – In class: **Katie Manning visit** and Introduction to Poetry  
Readings Due:  
“Poetry” pgs. 297-317  
Assorted poems and Poetry Format – pgs. 318-326  
**Project 2—Fiction Due**

11/10 – In Class: Setting & Story in poetry; discuss readings  
Readings Due:  
“Setting” pgs. 135-148  
Assorted poems – pgs. 154-157  
“Story” pgs. 166-175 (review—come to class with questions)  
Assorted poems – pgs. 187-189  
**Writing Events Reflection—Due**

Week 12 **Voice and Character in Poetry**

11/15 – In Class: Voice in Poetry  
“Voice” pgs. 47-61 (review—come to class with questions)  
Assorted poems – pgs. 85-88

11/17 – In Class: Character in Poetry; discuss readings; discuss Lit Journal Report  
“Character” pgs. 94-109  
Assorted poems – pgs. 127-130

Week 13 **More Poetry!**

11/22 – Read Assorted Poems on Canvas  
**Group A, B, and C Poetry Workshop Drafts Due**

11/24 – **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Week 14 **Workshop**

11/29 – **Poetry Workshop Group A—Attendance Required**  
**Critique Letters Due for Group A**

12/01 – **Poetry Workshop Group B—Attendance Required**  
**Critique Letters Due for Group B**  
**Project 3—Poetry Due (if you will revise the Poetry Project for the**  
**Final Revision/Expansion Project)**

Week 15 **Workshop, Revision, and Submitting to Literary Journals**

12/06 – **Poetry Workshop Group C—Attendance Required**  
**Critique Letters Due for Group C**

12/08 – Readings due:  
“Development and Revision” pgs. 195-218  
In Class: Revision and Expansion, discuss the Final Revision Project  
In Class: Submitting to Lit Journals  
**Lit. Journal Report Due**  
**Project 3—Fiction/Nonfiction Due**

Week 16 **Final: Reading from Final Revision Project**

12/15 – **FINAL EXAM PERIOD:** Thursday, 10:30am-1:00pm: Reading from  
Final Revision Project  
**Project 4—Revision/Expansion Due**

\*\* This schedule is subject to change at my discretion. I'll let you know with plenty of time if changes are made.

\*\* All reading assignments must be read for the day that they appear on the syllabus.