



Literature and Culture: Nature Writing

LIT 2000, Sec. 1

Dept. of Literature, Journalism, Writing, Languages,
and Environmental Studies

Spring 2024

2 units

Meeting days: Wednesdays	Instructor: Prof. Karen Seehaus
Meeting times: 1:00-2:55pm	E-mail: kseehaus@pointloma.edu
Meeting location: City Heights Room 208, Mid-City Church of the Nazarene	Office location: Bond Academic Center, Room 108
	Office hours: By appointment
Final Exam: Monday, 29 April, 1:30pm-4:00pm	Personal Zoom Room: https://pointloma.zoom.us/j/2812041711

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 is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Foundational Explorations Mission

PLNU provides a foundational course of study in the liberal arts informed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In keeping with the Wesleyan tradition, the curriculum equips students with a broad range of knowledge and skills within and across disciplines to enrich major study, lifelong learning, and vocational service as Christ-like participants in the world's diverse societies and culture.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What am I going to learn in this course?

LIT 2000 is an undergraduate course designed to introduce students to the study of literature. At the same time, this course will address some of the ways writers engage in thoughts about our relationship with the natural world. This particular section will focus on how the way we relate to nature affects human life and literature. According to Joan Didion, we tell ourselves stories to live; how we make those stories and enact them determines our engagement with the world. In

this course, we will pay particular attention to the way we tell stories about nature and our place in it: from various origin and creation narratives through contemporary science fiction, stories situate us in our world and influence our relationship with nature and each other; whether referring to the sky people falling through a hole to earth or the genetically engineered humans who survive a disease apocalypse, literary work wrestles with our place in nature and the unease we feel as a species outside of it.

We will read novels, short stories, poems, and non-fiction in narrative form; we'll then discuss and question how these texts create their impact and lead us towards the larger conversation of how literature can offer moments of transformation. Course lectures will provide you with important historical/biographical information and literary theory/terminology to put these authors' works in context. Together, we will develop the means to engage in intelligent literary discussion and analysis.

The PLNU catalog says that LIT 2000 is

A study of representative works of literature and cultural contexts.

Why do I have to take this course?

The short answer is that you need this course or one like it to graduate. The better answer is that this course will make you aware of how stories affect our lives—an awareness you can take from the classroom into many areas of your life. Being able to listen to read, analyze, synthesize, and enact stories gives you agency¹ in whatever field you may enter.

The more official answer is that this course is one of the components of the Foundational Explorations Program (FELO) at Point Loma Nazarene University, under the category of Exploring Arts and Culture. By including this course in a common educational experience for undergraduates, faculty supports a survey of human endeavors from a historical, cultural, linguistic, and philosophical perspective, including developing critical appreciation of human expression—both artistic and literary (PLNU Catalog).

PLNU provides a foundational course of study in the liberal arts informed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In keeping with the Wesleyan tradition, the curriculum equips students with a broad range of knowledge and skills within and across disciplines to enrich major study, lifelong learning, and vocational service as Christ-like participants in the world's diverse societies and culture.

COURSE AND FOUNDATIONAL EXPLORATIONS LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Institutional (ILO) and Foundational Explorations (FELO) Learning Outcomes addressed in this course are as follows:²

Context: Learning, Informed by our Faith in Christ

ILO #1: Students will acquire knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world while developing skills and habits that foster life-long learning

¹ The ability to act with power and authority.

² SLOs have been taken from Dr. Pedersen's LIT 3053 syllabus.

FELO 1a <i>Written Communication</i> : Students will be able to effectively express ideas and information to others through written communication.
FELO 1b <i>Oral Communication</i> : Students will be able to effectively express ideas and information to others through oral communication.
FELO 1c <i>Information Literacy</i> : Students will be able to access and cite information as well as evaluate the logic, validity, and relevance of information from a variety of sources.
FELO 1d <i>Critical Thinking</i> : Students will be able to examine, critique, and synthesize information in order to arrive at reasoned conclusions.
FELO 1e <i>Quantitative Reasoning</i> : Students will be able to solve problems that are quantitative in nature.
Context: Growing, In a Christ-Centered Faith Community ILO #2: Students will develop a deeper and more informed understanding of self and others as they negotiate complex environments
FELO 2a Students will develop an understanding of self that fosters personal wellbeing.
FELO 2b Students will understand and appreciate diverse forms of artistic expression.
FELO 2c Students will demonstrate an understanding of the complex issues faced by diverse groups in global and/or cross-cultural contexts.
Context: Serving, In a Context of Christian Faith ILO#3: Students will serve locally and/or globally in vocational and social settings
FELO 3 Students will demonstrate an understanding of Christian Scripture, Tradition, and Ethics, including engagement in acts of devotion and works of mercy.
Course Learning Outcomes for LIT 2000: Literature and Culture
CLO 1 Students will closely read and critically analyze texts in their original languages and/or in translation. (FELO 1d, 2b, 2c)
CLO 2 Students will recall, identify, and use fundamental concepts of literary study to read texts: terms, modes/genres, element, periods (dates, writers, characteristics, developments). (FELO 1d, 2b)
CLO 3 Students will connect the literary works with their own lives and with the social, cultural, and historical contexts of the works and their authors. (FELO 1d, 2b, 2c)

REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES

What do I have to buy for this course?

1. John Elder (Editor), Robert Finch (Editor): *The Norton Book of Nature Writing*
ISBN 9780393946345
2. Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein* (You must purchase the 1831 Edition)
ISBN-13 979-8756085242
3. Heather McGhee: *The Sum of Us*
ISBN-10 0525509585; ISBN-13 978-0525509585
4. Composition Book or similar for your journal.
5. Various office supplies (highlighters, pens, stapler, paper for notes).

6. Additional readings will be distributed to the class. These do not need to be purchased.

COURSE CREDIT HOUR INFORMATION

According to PLNU's Course Credit Hour Information:

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 2-unit class delivered over 15 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 75 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes.

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. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

CONTENT WARNING

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. In [class name], all of the class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. These topics include [list topics]. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, it can manifest in feelings of discomfort and upset. In response, I encourage you to come talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of [subject/major], and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

This class has a total of 1000 possible points. Your total points earned at the end of the semester will be evaluated on the following scale:

A	93-100 Percent
A-	90-92
B+	89-88
B	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

How do I pass this course?

1. Participate in this course.
2. Do all the assignments.
3. Turn them in on time.
4. Make sure your writing and your work is:
 - a. Thoughtful and considered
 - b. Typed (unless completed face-to-face)
 - c. **Formatted correctly – MLA is the default expectation**
 - d. Free of typos and other proofreading errors

What does that look like?

You will read a lot for this course. You will get the benefit from this course in proportion to how much you engage with the content. I expect you to read, engage with the text, and have thoughts about it. The weekly reading quizzes will help you stay on task with the reading. In addition, there will be some sort of writing completed every week.

What are the specific assignments?

Common Neighborhood Exegesis (200 points): Consider this assignment a critical think piece about your chosen neighborhood. You will design, complete, and submit an exegesis of your chosen neighborhood, highlighting any relevant nature history.

Weekly Composition Book Entries (150 points): These will be completed in class each week. I will give you a prompt at the beginning of class that you will respond to. If you are absent, you will miss the week's prompt.

You will get a stamp in class to prove you have completed your entry. I will read your entries for quality when I collect your books. Book collections will happen periodically throughout the semester.

Mandatory Attendance and Active Engagement at Two Community Classroom Dinners (50 points): Just like it sounds, you will be required to attend and actively participate in two Community Classroom Dinners. We don't have dates for these dinners at this time.

Teach Us How To... (150 points): You will teach the class about something in nature that matters to you. This could be as simple as teaching the class how to make your favorite vegetarian pasta or how to plant seeds. You could teach us about the proper way to keep a field guide, or about rock climbing. You could teach us about going for a nature walk in a familiar place. It's up to you. However, you must teach us to do something that foregrounds nature, elements of nature, things found in nature. In addition, your teaching must include a visual aids for the class. Props are also highly encouraged, as is storytelling.

To make sure you have a good idea in mind, you will sign up with me prior to teaching the class.

Norton Nature Writing Presentations (150 points): You will craft a 4-minute presentation to present the emerging issues, structures, themes, and authorial background in a reading selected from the *Nature Writing* book that we are **NOT** reading together as a course. The selections will be assigned on a first come, first served basis. It will be your job to make

your classmates and Prof. Seehaus wish that we had been assigned to read your chosen text.

Final Creative Project from Course Text (200 points): This assignment can take one of three forms (your choice). You may write your own personal nature narrative, craft an imitation of one of the writers' styles we've covered, or create an artistic response inspired by one of our texts. You will present a short reading or presentation of your work to the class during our scheduled final exam.

Course Participation (100 points): Effective learning happens in a dynamic environment. Therefore, you must interact with the instructor and the other students regularly. 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, and you must attend each class meeting and event. Use of cell phones will not be permitted unless you have an academic accommodation OR I give you specific permission. Other electronic reading devices are allowed on the days we have texts in digital format; **however, if you use your device to disengage from course discussion, I will sweetly ask you to leave that day and try again next time.**

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

What if I turn in a late assignment?

If you miss the day an assignment is due, your grade on the assignment will drop a letter grade for every late day (not class days, actual days). For example, if an assignment is due on Wednesday and you submit that assignment on Thursday, the best grade you can receive will be a B. The notable exception to this is if you have made a prior arrangement with me to turn in an assignment on an alternative schedule. Extensions are decided on a case-by-case basis. If you are struggling with an assignment due to illness or another situation, please talk with me **before** that assignment is due.

PLNU INCOMPLETE AND LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

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

It is perfectly okay (and expected!) to reference other texts (written or visual) in your own writing. However, you must give credit to any ideas, words, phrases, or sentences that are not originally yours or aren't common knowledge. To omit doing this action is an act of plagiarism. 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 (such as taking suggestions from a professor or a peer), but there are also ways to use other people's ideas or words in a way that is considered plagiarism (such as passing off somebody else's work—even just a sentence—as your own). We will discuss this further in class.

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Any word or idea that is not your own must be cited correctly. As explained in the University Catalog,

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.

See Academic Policies for further information.

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

What about Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g, ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. Any work that was created with the assistance of an AI tool at any stage in its creation must include proper attribution, which may include an in-text citation, bibliographic citation, and/or an author's note. If you have any doubts about proper use of AI, please speak with me.

What kind of technology do I need?

In order to be successful using Canvas and participating in the online components of this class, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [Technology and System Requirements](#) information. Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers compatible with their computer available to use. If a student is in need of technological resources please contact student-tech-request@pointloma.edu.

Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

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

Yes. Here's a brief list!

Tutorial Services (i.e. tutoring, paper editing, review sessions & Academic Coaching) will be offered. Utilizing the online resource [Brainfuse](#) offers PLNU students live, on-demand homework help from Brainfuse-certified tutors in a variety of college subjects. Tutors and students communicate in real-time through the Brainfuse Online Classroom. Whatever you type, draw, or share on the screen, the tutor sees, and vice versa. All your tutoring sessions are recorded for later review.

The Library has a tremendous amount of information available to you for your research. In addition to traditional books, the library has many databases (which provide electronic articles and source material) that allow you to do specific searches on nearly any topic. Further, Ryan Library is home to many very helpful librarians who can assist you, even virtually. <https://libguides.pointloma.edu/RyanLibrary> In addition, Ryan Library is home

to Writing Center, which can provide any student in any class with writing support. **Canvas** will become your very close friend, as it will provide you access to the syllabus, course materials, assignment prompts, and it will be the place you turn in your work, etc. **Wikipedia** is an online encyclopedia www.wikipedia.org. 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. While I love Wikipedia for its ability to quickly provide information, **DO NOT** use this as a source for your papers.

What if need 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](#).

STATE AUTHORIZATION

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

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.

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 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.

LANGUAGE AND BELONGING

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

You may report an incident(s) using the [Bias Incident Reporting Form](#).

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND DISCRIMINATION

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/title-ix.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an “F” grade.

PLNU FACE MASK POLICY

Masking

In response to the [CDC’s latest guidelines](#) and [California Department of Public Health Recommendations](#), **PLNU has updated our policy for masking**. Masks are not currently required. We will continue to monitor the data to inform a change in policy that aligns with [CDC guidance](#).

LIT 2000-1 Schedule³

Subject to Change as needed to facilitate course goals.
Readings and assignments are due on the date listed.
NW denotes readings from *Norton Nature Writing*.

WEEK 1
10 January

READ FOR FOLLOWING WEEK

Syllabus/FAQ

Shelley *Frankenstein*, Chapters 1-12, pages 1-134

DO

Attend the first class meeting

Obtain books and supplies as assigned in syllabus and discussed in first class

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)

WEEK 2
17 January

DISCUSS

Shelley

READ FOR FOLLOWING WEEK

Shelley *Frankenstein*, Chapters 13-24, pages 134-268

DO

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)

³ Note: 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.

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.

This is a literature class. You will read A LOT. Please plan to give yourself time to curl up with the texts and read them.

WEEK 3
24 January

DISCUSS

Shelley
Common Neighborhood Exegesis

READ FOR FOLLOWING WEEK

NW Thoreau (180 – 205)
Poetry Packet (Distributed in Class)

DO

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)

WEEK 4
31 January

DISCUSS

British and American Romantics
Common Neighborhood Exegesis

READ FOR FOLLOWING WEEK

McGhee *The Sum of Us* (Introduction and pages 1-100)

DO

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)

WEEK 5
7 February

DISCUSS

McGhee
Discuss concept for Teach Us How To...

READ FOR FOLLOWING WEEK

McGhee *The Sum of Us* (101-191)

DO

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)
Sign up for dates for Teach Us How To...

WEEK 6
14 February

ATTEND

Community Classroom Dinner #1 – 15 February (Thursday), 5:00-6:30pm, Located in Fellowship Hall at Mid-City Church of the Nazarene

IN CLASS

Teach Us How To... Presentations Group 1

DISCUSS

McGhee

READ FOR FOLLOWING WEEK

McGhee *The Sum of Us* (192-289)

DO

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)

WEEK 7
21 February

IN CLASS

Teach Us How To... Presentations Group 2

DISCUSS

McGhee

READ FOR FOLLOWING WEEK

NW Hopkins (281 – 286)

NW Merton (545 – 554)

NW McKibben (1120 – 1130)

DO

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)

Common Neighborhood Exegesis (Due on Canvas on 22 February by 11:59pm)

WEEK 8
28 February

IN CLASS

Teach Us How To... Presentations Group 3

DISCUSS

Consumerism and relationship with natural world (Merton)
Activists and Lovers (McKibben, Hopkins)

READ FOR FOLLOWING WEEK

NW Steinbeck (465 – 468)
NW Darwin (151 – 161)
NW Kincaid (1015 – 1022)
NW Walker (863 – 867)
NW Standing Bear (326 – 331)
NW Wright (494 – 497)

DO

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)
Peer Review and Comment on Neighborhood Exegesis (Due on Canvas on 1 March by 11:59pm)

*******NO CLASS: Spring Break 4 March – 8 March*******

WEEK 9
13 March

DISCUSS

Race and our relationship with the environment (previous week's READ)

READ FOR FOLLOWING WEEK

NW Bruchac (811 – 818)
NW Momaday (737 – 743)
NW Grover (891 – 900)
NW Le Guin (651 – 658)

DO

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)

WEEK 10
20 March

DISCUSS

What do we value about nature and why (Grover, Momaday)
Telling Stories to Understand (Le Guin, Bruchac)

READ FOR FOLLOWING WEEK

NW Muir (250 – 258)
NW Carson (479 – 485)
NW Abbey (614 – 627)
NW Lopez (914 – 923)

DO

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)

WEEK 11
27 March

DISCUSS

Sense of place (Lopez, Muir)
Story (Abbey, Carson)

READ FOR FOLLOWING WEEK

NW Wallace (930 – 936)
NW McPhee (684 – 690)
NW Perin (644 – 650)

DO

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)

WEEK 12
3 April

DISCUSS

Story (Wallace, McPhee, and Perin)
Discuss concept for Norton Nature Writing Presentations

DO

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)
Sign up for dates for Norton Nature Writing Presentations

WEEK 13
10 April

ATTEND

Community Classroom Dinner #2 – 9 April (Tuesday), 5:00-6:30pm, Located in Fellowship Hall at Mid-City Church of the Nazarene

IN CLASS

Norton Nature Writing Presentations Group 1

DO

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)

WEEK 14
17 April

IN CLASS

Norton Nature Writing Presentations Group 2

DISCUSS

Upcoming Final Exam Assignment, aka Final Creative Project from Course Text

DO

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)

WEEK 15
24 April

IN CLASS

Norton Nature Writing Presentations Group 3

DO

Weekly Composition Book Entry (In Class)

Participation: End-Of-Course Evaluation

WEEK 16 – FINALS WEEK
29 April (Monday)

Monday, 29 April, 1:30pm – 4pm: Final

DO

Submit Final Creative Project from Course Text