

Department of Literature, Journalism, Writing and Languages

LIT 2000: Literature & Culture

EXISTENTIAL LITERATURE

Section 5 | Spring 2024 | 2 Units

Meeting time & place:	M/W • 2:45 p.m. to 4 p.m. BAC 103
Final Exam:	Friday, May 3, 2024 • 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. [Zoom]
Professor:	Danielle Cervantes Stephens, M.A. Visiting Professor of Literature, Journalism & French
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Email:	Canvas Inbox • dcervantes2000@pointloma.edu
Office Hours:	BAC 127 or Zoom 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 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

Section 5 of LIT 2000 focuses on Existential Literature. We will explore a curated selection of short narratives—including Scripture, novella, short story, novel (excerpts), theatre, essay, poetry, film and transcribed public lectures. These works date from antiquity to the present and span the African, Asian, European and North American continents.

Foundational Explorations and Program Learning Outcomes (FELOs, LIT PLOs)

By the end of Existential Literature, students will be able to:

- Closely read (comprehension, analysis) and critically analyze (analysis) texts in their original languages or in translation. (FELO 2c) (LIT PLO 2, 3, 5)
- Recall (knowledge), identify (knowledge), and use (application) fundamental concepts of literary study to read and discuss texts. (FELO 2c) (LIT PLO 2, 3, 4)
 - Standard literary terminology
 - Modes/genres of literature
 - Elements of literary genres
 - Literary periods (dates, writers, characteristics, and important developments)
- Connect (synthesis) the works with their own lives and with the social, cultural, and historical contexts of the works and their authors. (FELO 2c) (LIT PLO 1)

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 16 weeks. Students will spend a total of 2.5 hours per week in class and approximately 6-8 hours outside of class doing readings and assignments (R&Rs, essay, presentation), and Canvas quizzes. Below is an approximated breakdown of students' time investment for the entire semester by grade distribution.

Course Grade Distribution by Time Investment

COURSE COMPONENT	FREQUENCY / TIME INVESTMENT	TOTAL TIME [outside class]	GRADE
Participation & attendance	Each class	-----	±10%
Engaging with literature	1-2 hours before each class	15-30 hours	35%
Reflections & responses (R&Rs)	1 every literary work, 1-2 hours each	15-30 hours	
Analyzing literature	1 written literary analysis [mid-semester]	8-10 hours	15%
Reading & literary vocabulary assessment	10-20 minute quizzes online due <i>before</i> class	4 hours	20%
Presentation	1 presentation [Final Exam on Zoom]	6-8 hours	10%
Final Exam	2 hours review; 1 hour online (optional ≥95%)	3 hours	±10%
Extra credit	1-3 hours per activity/assignment	0-5 hours	(±5%)
TOTAL	2 UNITS	50-85 hours	100%

Course Structure & Schedule

- **The primary components of the course include lectures on readings and literary terms, in-class group discussions and activities, readings outside of class, written homework assignments and quizzes on your readings and lectures.**
- Your readings, assignments and quizzes will be coordinated through **Canvas Announcements, Assignments, and Files** tabs. Check those at least once Monday-Saturday.
- **Readings are due *before* you complete your R&R, so that is typically *after* they have been introduced in lecture.**
- **Projects:** You will have a **literary analysis** (3-5 page essay) due around mid-semester and an **oral presentation** on the day of the Final Exam on Zoom.
- There will be no **Midterm Exam**, but we will have a comprehensive **Final Exam** which you may not have to take if your *quiz grade* is already an A (≥95%).
- **Changes to the schedule** may be required at any time, at the discretion of the professor. Changes may be necessitated by class pace, instructional need, or illness. Students are responsible for noting any/all schedule changes.

Assessment & Grading

Grades will be based on the scale in the table following these reminders.

- **Submit all coursework** through Canvas.
- Grades will be posted on **Canvas** according to the weighted components of the course.
- **Making the most of the course** will involve close and slow reading of the literary texts, thoughtful reflections on the works we study, engaged participation in discussions (in-person or online), completion of assignments in a timely manner, posing your own questions and seeking answers from writers and their texts, connecting these works to our faith and ethics, empathizing with the experiences of others, and above all, being confident in your convictions to *consider* multiple points of view on difficult questions.

- For your work **to improve**, it is vital to read the comments I post in the gradebook and the hand-written annotations I write inside the body of your R&Rs.
- **Formatting your assignments in MS Word:**
 - **12-point font** (Arial, Times, Sagona, Calibri, Trebuchet)
 - **single-spaced**
 - **.75-inch-to-1-inch margins on all sides**
 - **Save as .doc or docx.** If I cannot open your document or read it, it will be considered late until you remedy the issue. Do not submit any PDFs or image files (e.g., jpg, png, tiff) unless the assignment expressly asks for you to upload an image of hand-written material.

Grade Composition

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale and distribution of elements.

- **Participation:** Because lecture and discussion will be an important part of our class, attendance (remote, virtual, in-person) is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. Worth **10%**, participation includes good attendance, coming to class with your reading and R&Rs done, joining in-class discussions, listening actively, and taking notes in class. Coming to class unprepared, staring at your phone, or being distracting or disruptive in class may count against your participation score. If you already know that you'll be missing more than two classes due to a pre-existing schedule conflict (e.g. athletics, work, childcare, medical appointments), you should reconsider taking this course at this time. If you arrive late to an in-person class, please take a seat closest to the back door and be respectful of those around you.
- **Homework (R&Rs)** is worth **35%** of your grade and will be submitted before every class on Canvas. Assignments may require you to return to your readings or class notes for clarification. R&Rs will guide you through a series of questions on the reading and encourage you to compare and contrast texts, writers and theories we cover in the course. See formatting guidelines above.
- A **presentation** comprises **10%** of your grade. Students will pick a topic from a short list of themes. The deadline to choose topics and sign up for timeslots will be posted on Canvas. Presentations should be approximately 8 to 10 minutes in length. The presentation should be creative and well-organized, ideally stimulating a dialogue in class. You will be graded on pronunciation, correct grammar, clarity of communication, depth of content, and relevance to course themes.
- The **final examination** is worth **10%** of your grade. It will be comprehensive, covering any/all quizzed material to-date; it will be available to take online during a one-week window. If your *quiz* grade is high enough going into the final exam [$\geq 95\%$], you may not need to take the exam.
- **Extra credit opportunities** will be announced on Canvas in advance. You can augment your overall course grade up to 5% (a one half-letter grade).

Grade Composition Measurement and Distribution

Grade Scale (percentages)				
A	B	C	D	F
A 95-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F ±59
A- 90-94	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

GRADING SCALE

A = 95-100 A- = 94-90	Exceptional work that goes above and beyond the requirements of the assignment; accurate, thoughtful and sophisticated analysis that offers the reader something to consider; excellent logic, structure, and organization; virtually no grammar and punctuation errors.
B+ = 87-89 B = 83-86 B- = 80-82	Good work that exceeds the minimum requirements of the assignment; no major problems with logic, structure, and organization; very few grammar and punctuation errors; accurate facts.

C+ = 77-79 C = 73-76 C- = 70-72	Average work that meets the minimum requirements of the assignment; may have minor problems with logic, structure, and organization; may have some grammar and punctuation errors; inaccuracies.
D+ = 67-69 D = 63-66 D- = 60-62	Poor work that does not fully meet the minimum requirements of the assignment; may have some problems with logic, structure, and organization; grammar and punctuation errors may hinder meaning; significant inaccuracy.
F = 0-59	Plagiarization: zero tolerance; use of any/all AI tools in written assignments ; copying another's work (either with or without permission; any/all students involved will fail the assignment); poor work that does not fulfill the assignment; may have serious problems with logic, structure, or organization; grammar and punctuation errors may obscure meaning; wildly inaccurate. See AI policy below.

Required Readings/Texts and Study Resources

Readings will be posted to Canvas. I will scan and upload as PDFs as many works as possible. For the remaining works, students may be required to access titles via Amazon Kindle. Many titles are free, but you might consider subscribing to Kindle Unlimited for the duration of this course.

Academic Writing & MLA Style

For written work, follow MLA Style and its standards for academic literary and inclusive writing. Points will be lost for errors in MLA Style use. **See AI policy below.**

Deadlines, Incompletes and Late Assignments

- Do not rely on in-class reminders about homework. Consult **Canvas before and after every class.**
- All homework must be turned in at the **beginning of the class session when it is due**—whether handwritten homework or digital exercises.
- **Late homework** will be accepted **up to one [1] week** past the deadline, with a **5% daily penalty.**
- **Quizzes and exams will be completed online before class. Missed quizzes or exams cannot be made up without an official school excused absence.** I will drop your lowest quiz score at the end of the semester, and there will be opportunities for extra credit.
- **Course incompletes (I)** will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances and must be arranged with me in advance. If you find yourself in such a situation, contact me immediately and be ready to provide documentation to help clarify the seriousness of your situation.

Final Examination Policy

Some rules can't be bent. 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.

PLNU & LJWL Academic Honesty Policies

Point Loma Nazarene University 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. The **Department of Literature, Journalism, Writing and Languages** deems intellectual and academic integrity critical to academic success and personal development; therefore, any unethical practice will be detrimental to the student's academic record and moral character. Students who present the work of others as if it were their own commit plagiarism. Plagiarized work will result in a failing grade for the assignment and possibly for the course. In either event, a written report will be filed with the department chair and the area dean. The dean will

review the report and submit it to the Provost and the Vice President for Student Development. It will then be placed in the student's academic file.

PLNU Attendance and De-Enrollment Policy

- Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If a student is absent from more than **10 percent** of the course (3 class sessions), the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed **20 percent** (6 class sessions), 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 Academic Policies in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.]
- **Students must maintain their own class schedules.** Should a need arise to drop or withdrawal from a course, the student is responsible for completing and submitting all necessary official forms (online or paper) to drop or withdrawal from the course, provided it meets the stated calendar deadline established by the university. Failing to attend and/or to complete required protocols may result in a grade of F on the student's official transcript.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

You are only allowed to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g, ChatGPT and others) for creative purposes (image, video, audio), but you are ***prohibited from using any AI tools to answer homework assignments (R&Rs), to write essays, to take quizzes, or to generate any written content whatsoever*** that you submit as your own for this course. I do not mind if you use language tools to check your spelling and grammar. If you have any concerns or doubts, talk to me. If I suspect cheating with AI (sorry to say, it's pretty obvious), you may fail the assignment or the class if I notice a pattern.

In-Person Course Modality Definition

Course meetings are face-to-face with no more than 25% online delivery.

Use of Technology

In order to be successful in this course, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to **Technology and System Requirements**. Additionally, students may be required to have headphone speakers, microphone, or webcams compatible with their computer available to use. Please note that any course with online proctored exams requires a computer with a camera (tablets are not compatible) to complete exams online. Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work. **If you do not have a computer or are experiencing temporary technical issues with yours, computer labs and printers are available for free in Ryan Learning Center and at Liberty Station.**

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). 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.

Spiritual Care

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

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**](#).

Content Warnings

Each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences, which contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. In Existential Literature, all of the course's 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 may include explicit language, sexual situations, sexism, racism, ablism, violence, rape, death, suicide, near-death experiences, drug addiction, colonialism, war, slavery, torture, imprisonment, incarceration, genocide, holocaust, natural disasters, environmental catastrophe, and a range of lifestyles transgressive of Wesleyan Holiness traditions.** 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 existentialism. Let's have a dialogue! I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

Trigger Warnings

In Existential Literature, we will cover a variety of topics, some of which you may find triggering. See Content Warnings above for examples. The experience of being triggered versus intellectually challenged are different. The main difference is that an individual must have experienced trauma to experience being triggered, whereas an intellectual challenge has nothing to do with trauma. If you are a trauma survivor and encounter a topic in this class that is triggering for you, you may feel overwhelmed or panicked and find it difficult to concentrate. In response, I encourage you to take the necessary steps for your emotional safety. This may include leaving class while the topic is discussed or talking to a therapist at the Counseling Center. Should you choose to sit out on discussion of a certain topic, know that you are still responsible for the material; but we can discuss if there are other methods for accessing that material, and for assessing your learning on that material. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of literature and existentialism. If these difficult topics appear in readings, lyrics, videos, homework, or cultural activities, I will make an announcement ahead of time so that we can find a suitable substitute if the material is too intrusive.

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**](#). 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**](#) or find a list of [**Campus Pastors**](#).

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.

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.