



**Department of Language, Journalism, Writing & Literature**

ENG 3023- 1 | Creative Writing: Creative Non-Fiction (3 units)

Fall 2024

<b>Meeting days:</b> Tuesdays & Thursdays	<b>Instructor title and name:</b> Dr. Margarita Pintado Burgos
<b>Meeting times:</b> 9:30am - 10:45am	<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:mpintado@pointloma.edu">mpintado@pointloma.edu</a>
<b>Meeting location:</b> Bond Academic Center (BAC), room 105A.  <b>Final Exam:</b> Friday, December 20, 10:30am- 1:00pm, BAC 105A.	<b>Office Location and Hours:</b> Bond Academic Center (BAC) 120/ Mondays, Wednesdays 9:30-10:50/ 1:30- 2:30; Thursdays 11:00-1:00 and 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.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**From the PLNU catalog:** *Comprehensive instruction and guided workshop in creative nonfiction writing, including personal essays and memoirs. Attention is also given to methodology in teaching nonfiction writing and to finding publication.*

In this course you will learn, develop, and practice the skills needed to read and write creative nonfiction. Writing well is not an innate gifting, but something that can be practiced and improved. This course will expose you to various writing styles, nonfiction subgenres, and essayistic forms via both the course readings and in-class writing exercises. The major essay assignments will allow you an opportunity to develop these writing exercises further into completed essay drafts through expansion, workshop, and revision. You will also learn about literary journals that publish creative nonfiction and submit your work for publication at the end

of the semester. This class will cause you to question your assumptions about creative nonfiction and will prepare you to write and publish compelling essays on your own in the future.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students who complete ENG 3023 will be able to:

1. identify aspects of theory, style, and structure in works of creative nonfiction;
2. analyze creative nonfiction written by professionals and peers to determine authors' writing techniques in relationship to target audiences;
3. employ research techniques as necessary to meet the demands of creative nonfiction craft and content;
4. craft creative nonfiction using techniques specific to genre to create descriptive and evocative language;
5. apply workshop techniques for constructive criticism of peers and in turn take criticism and use it to improve their own work;
6. format texts in a genre-appropriate and professional manner for submission to workshop and publication;
7. present written work to live audiences, demonstrating strategies for audience engagement and oral communication.

## **DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

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

1. Further our knowledge of both the craft and art of writing creative nonfiction.
2. Gain an understanding of how to apply nonfiction craft elements such as “Eye vs. I,” major dramatic questions, and lyricism.
3. Further an understanding of and ability to utilize general writing craft elements such as point of view, voice, story arc, dialogue, description, and scene/summary.
4. Grow in our knowledge of creative nonfiction's subgenres: personal essay, researched historical profile, researched historical narrative, reportage/narrative journalism, creative analysis, flash essay, and experimental essay.
5. Endeavor to explain how creative nonfiction works as 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.
6. Work together in small-group workshops, and individually after those workshops, in order to explore and practice the discipline of revision.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

- Kincaid, Jamaica, *A Small Place*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux; First Edition (28 April 2000) **ISBN-13:** 978-0374527075

All essays uploaded on Canvas as course readings must be printed out, read, annotated, and brought to class on the day that they're due.

Also, you will be required to subscribe to *The New Yorker*, which costs about 6\$ per year.

## 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 nonfiction, and three finished writing projects: three nonfiction submissions. Class time will be divided accordingly: lecture and discussion, small group discussion, in-class writing, and workshop.

## ASSIGNMENTS

Workshop & In-Class writing exercises 15%

Short essays 20%

Presentations: 10%

Final Portfolio: 20%

Final- longer essay for submission to a journal: 20 %

Attendance & class participation: 15%

## 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. I will look for:

- Adherence to and mastery of Creative Nonfiction (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.

Sample Standard Grade Scale Based on Percentages

A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F Less than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

## **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 [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam 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**

Each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences which contribute to the way you perceive various types of information. In WRI 4000, all 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. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, I encourage you to talk to me about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

## **TRIGGER WARNING**

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive several types of information. In ENG 3023, we will cover a variety of topics, some of which you may find triggering. These topics include [list topics]. Each time this topic appears in a reading or unit, it is marked on the syllabus. 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 Creative Writing and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

## **SPIRITUAL CARE**

Please be aware 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 your professor or the [Office of Spiritual 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 RECORDING NOTIFICATION**

To enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel. Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

### **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.

### **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY**

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g, ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski) is **NOT** allowed in this class. If any of these are detected, you will receive a zero in the assignment.

### **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 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.

## **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.

### **LOMA WRITING CENTER**

The Loma Writing Center exists to help all members of the PLNU community cultivate transferable writing skills to engage their academic, professional, personal, and spiritual communities. We work toward this goal by conducting one-on-one consultation sessions, supporting writing education across the PLNU community, and participating in ongoing writing center research. Getting feedback from the Loma Writing Center while you’re in the process of working on an assignment is a great way to improve the quality of your writing and develop as a writer. You are encouraged to talk with a trained writing consultant about getting started on an assignment, organizing your ideas, finding and citing sources, revising, editing for grammar and polishing final drafts, and more. For information about how to make in-person or online appointments, see [Loma Writing Center webpage](#) or visit the Loma Writer Center on the first floor of the Ryan Library, room 221.

- Appointment Calendar: <https://plnu.mywconline.com/>
- Website: <https://www.pointloma.edu/centers-institutes/loma-writing-center>
- Email: [writingcenter@pointloma.edu](mailto:writingcenter@pointloma.edu)

## **COURSE POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. Missing class for other than medical emergencies or excused PLNU absences will affect your grade, as per the University Catalog. 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 professor has the option of filing 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 withdrawal date, or after that date, receive an F grade. If the date of de-enrollment is past the last date to withdraw from a class, the student will be assigned a grade of W or WF consistent with university policy in the grading section of the catalog. See current Academic Policies in the academic catalog.

**Class Preparation:** All assignments must be completed prior to the assigned due date and time. Some assignments will be discussed in class while others will be completed individually but not discussed.

**Class Participation:** Regular contributions to class discussion are expected, including but not restricted to discussions of weekly readings, related experiential exercises, and open dialogue. Despite the size of the class, I want everyone to feel compelled to share their thoughts on assigned readings.

**Workshop:** Workshop participation, feedback, and attendance is mandatory and graded. Throughout the semester we will be reading and critiquing one another’s essays 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.

Subject Matter: This course will ask you to write whatever you want to write about, but keep in mind that you'll be sharing your writing with your professor and classmates. I respect your privacy and truly believe that this class should allow you creative freedom, so all I will ask is that if you are unsure/nervous or have a hunch that something might be questionable, discuss your ideas with me in advance of bringing them to workshop.

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

All major assignments must be turned in on Canvas on the day they are due in addition to being printed and turned in hard copy at class. 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 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.

**E-MAIL**: Please use e-mail for simple, logistical questions or clarifications. Write: "ENG 3023" in the subject line. Allow 24 hours/ 1 business day for a reply.

**PUBLIC DISCOURSE**: Much of the work we will do in this class is cooperative, by nature of the class discussions and general feedback given to written work and/projects; thus, 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.

### **PREPARATION**

You will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss readings, share your work, 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 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.

## Course Schedule

\*Subject to Change\*

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### **WEEK 1**

September 3, T/

#### ***The Personal Essay***

Course introduction and welcome.

<https://creativenonfiction.org/what-is-cnf/>

September 5, TH/

Canvas- *Tell It Slant*, “The Personal Essay” 91-102

Montaigne “On a Monster Child” & “On Fear,” available here, also in

Canvas <https://hyperessays.net/essays/on-a-monster-child/>

<https://hyperessays.net/essays/on-fear/>

**In class writing exercise**

### **WEEK 2**

September 10, T/

#### ***The Personal Essay***

Canvas- *On Writing Well*: “Nonfiction as Literature,” 95-99.

Canvas- Virginia Woolf: “The Death of a Moth”

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mc.it/sharifah.alatas/teaching/2019/21609/files/Woolf\_DeathoftheMoth.pdf

& “Professions for Women,”

<https://www.gutenberg.net.au/ebooks12/1203811h.html#ch-28>

assignment: write a brief (800 words approx.) reflection on Virginia Woolf’s essays (due one day earlier, the 9<sup>th</sup>. See Canvas for details.

September 12, TH/

Canvas- “Once More to the Lake,” E. B. White

<https://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/brent.baggaley/eng11302-14/readings-and-links/once-more-to-the-lake/view>

Canvas- *The Fourth Genre*: “Going to the Movies,” Susan Allen Toth, 226-228.

**In class writing exercise**

### **WEEK 3**

September 17, T/

**WORKSHOP:** Bring in your personal essay draft (1000 words minimum.)

September 19, TH/

#### ***Memoir***

Canvas- *The Art of Memoir* 1| “The Past’s Vigor,” 1-7.

*Tell It Slant/ Part I*: “Unearthing Your Material: The Body of Memory,”

3- 12; “Writing the Family,” 17-22; “Why so many people are going no contact with their parents,” *The New Yorker*, August 30, 2024:

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/annals-of-inquiry/why-so-many-people-are-going-no-contact-with-their-parents>

**In class writing exercise**

September 20, F/ **Turn in your personal essay** (5 pages minimum, double spaced, TNR #12) in Canvas, by 11:59pm.

#### **WEEK 4**

September 24, T/ **Memoir**  
Canvas- “Notes of a Native Son,” James Baldwin, 76- 102.  
chromeextension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgglefindmkaj/https://www.whatsoproudlywehail.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Baldwin\_Notes-of-a-Native-Son.pdf  
**assignment: write a brief (800 words approx.) reflection on Baldwin’s essay (due one day earlier, the 23<sup>th</sup>. See Canvas for details.**

September 26, TH/ continuation of “Notes of a Native Son;”  
Canvas- *The Fourth Genre*: “The Unwanted Child,” Mary Clearman Blew, 11-20; **In class exercise** using Donna’s poem.

#### **WEEK 5**

October 1, T/ **Places & Traveling**  
Canvas- *On Writing Well*: “Writing About Places: The Travel Article,” 116-131. *Tell It Slant*: “Taking Place”: Writing the Physical World, 25- 35.  
Here is New York, by E.B. White  
chromeextension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgglefindmkaj/https://langurbansociology.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/white-on-nyc.pdf  
**In class exercise: writing about a place**

October 3, TH/ “How the Finnish survive without small talk”  
<https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20181016-how-the-finnish-survive-without-small-talk>  
Canvas- “The Case Against Travel,” Agnes Callard, *The New Yorker*, June 24, 2023. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/the-weekend-essay/the-case-against-travel>

#### **WEEK 6**

October 8, T/ **Places & Traveling**  
*A Small Place*, Kincaid  
**assignment: write a brief reflection, 500 words approx.**

October 10, TH *A Small Place*

#### **WEEK 7**

October 15, T **WORKSHOP**: Bring in your travel essay draft (1000 words minimum.)

October 17, TH **Turn in your travel essay** (5 pages minimum, double spaced, TNR #12) in Canvas, by 11:59pm.

#### **WEEK 8**

October 22, T **Nature**  
*The Problem of Nature Writing* <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/the-weekend-essay/the-problem-of-nature-writing>;

Kathryn Schulz, “What do we hope to find when we look for a snow leopard?”, *The New Yorker*, July 5, 2021.  
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/07/12/what-do-we-hope-to-find-when-we-look-for-a-snow-leopard>  
**assignment: write a brief reflection, 500 words approx.**

October 24, TH ☺ FALL BREAK, no school ☺

**WEEK 9**

October 29, T *Nature*  
Canvas- Diane Ackerman, “How to Watch a Hummingbird,” *The New York Times*, 1994.

October 31, TH Kathryn Schulz, “Studying Stones Can Rock Your World,” August 26, 2024.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/09/02/turning-to-stone-discovering-the-subtle-wisdom-of-rocks-marcia-bjornerud-book-review>

**WEEK 10**

November 5, T **Election Day!**  
**WORKSHOP:** Bring in your nature essay draft (1000 words minimum.)

November 7, TH **Turn in your nature essay** (5 pages minimum, double spaced, TNR #12) in Canvas, by 11:59pm.

**WEEK 11**

November 12, T *Critical Essay*  
CANVAS- “The Double Standard of Aging,” Susan Sontag, 3-39.  
**assignment: write a brief reflection, 500 words approx.**

November 14, TH Jonathan Haidt, “Why the past ten years of American life have been uniquely stupid,” *The Atlantic*, April 11, 2022,

**WEEK 12**

November 19, T *Critical Essay*  
George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language”  
<https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/politics-and-the-english-language/>

November 21, TH OWW ~ Writing About the Arts 193-206.  
*Tell It Slant*: “Writing the Arts,” 53- 59.  
Ted Chiang, “Why A.I. Isn’t Going to Make Art,” *The New Yorker*, August 31, 2024

**WEEK 13**

November 26, T **WORKSHOP:** Bring in your critical essay draft (1000 words minimum.)

November 28, TH **Thanksgiving BREAK, no school.**

**WEEK 14**

December 3, T **WORKSHOP**

December 5, TH      **WORKSHOP**

**WEEK 15**

December 10, T      student's presentations

December 12, TH      student's presentations

December 19      😊 **Turn in final portfolio** 😊