

UNIVERSITY NOW SYLLABUS
WRITING & COMPOSITION
Fall 2025

Instructor: Professor Karen Seehaus (Writing)
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Class Time and Location: Mondays, 1:45-3:15pm, Evans Hall, Room 113

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.

History of University Now: The idea of high school students taking university course work in a cooperative venture between PLNU and San Diego high schools began in 1997, funded by a grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. Dr. Darrel Falk, long time PLNU biology professor, founded the program, which was exclusively a science class until 2001, when writing was added to the program. High schools participating in past years include E3, Gompers, Morse, Madison, Lincoln, and Point Loma High School.

Objectives:

1. To help students envision themselves as successful university students.
2. To provide a jump-start on acquiring the skills needed to succeed in college.
3. To earn college credits.
4. To build a caring and supportive classroom community.
5. To help prepare students to become leaders in their chosen fields.
6. To encourage students to be generous in sharing their gifts and talents with others.

Course Learning Outcomes

Composition

By the end of the composition course, students will be able to:

- Construct college application essays, each with a clear focus and authentic story
- Edit their work to conform to the standard conventions of English grammar and usage
- Construct clear and concise prose with thesis statements supported by focused paragraphs
- Identify the thesis statements and primary arguments in written texts
- Respond to and work with source material fairly and accurately
- Demonstrate the ability to use the PLNU library

Evaluation

Your composition grade will be comprised of the following components:

English (500 Points)

Diagnostic Exam (25 Points)

4 Skill-building Essays (200 Points)

Portfolio of Revised Essays - All 4 Skill-building Essays Revised (75 Points)

Weekly Composition Book Entries (75 Points)

Final Exam (50 Points)

Attendance and Class Participation (75 Points)

The grades you receive for college credit on your college transcript are calculated and recorded as two individual grades, one for writing and one for biology.

Cheating

There is zero tolerance for academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is stealing other people's work and calling it your own. Examples would include plagiarizing material from the internet or another source, copying a homework assignment, a quiz or a laboratory report. It also includes turning an individual homework assignment into a group assignment. **Collaboration is encouraged, but cheating is not tolerated and may result in expulsion from the course.**

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. More than three absences from the course for the semester for any reason will result in an intervention, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Late Policy

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.

Plagiarism and Acceptable Use of Work

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>

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.

Tutoring

Tutoring groups will be assigned at the beginning of the semester by class professors. Always bring your notebook, your textbook, and all class material with you to the tutoring sessions. Tutoring and quiz sessions will count a total of five percent of your total class grade. Tutors file weekly tutoring reports with professors. Switching of tutoring groups is not allowed.

Other Supplies You Will Need

*Composition Book or similar for your journal

*Various office supplies (highlighters, pens, stapler, Scotch tape, paper for notes)

Canvas

Canvas is a website that contains material from the class, including assignments, and other class materials. The website for accessing canvas is <https://canvas.pointloma.edu> Your passwords will be given to you during the first class.

Professionalism

Students are expected to act in a manner appropriate for a university campus setting. Obvious examples would include:

1. No eating in the classroom.
2. No putting your head down or sleeping during lecture.
3. No whispering, talking or fooling around during class.

UNow Schedule:

**Note: The UNow Retreat typically occurs on a Friday early in the semester.
Save Friday, 26 September for the UNow Retreat. Details will be shared in class.**

WEEK 1: 8 September

Brief Overview of Two Semesters of UNow Writing
Diagnostic Exam

WEEK 2: 15 September

Weekly Composition Book Entry
Strength-finders Games
Retreat Update
Review Admission Requirements for CSU
Review Admission Requirements for UC

WEEK 3: 22 September (Walk to Ryan Library – Computer Lab)

Weekly Composition Book Entry
Overview of 8 Personal Insight Questions for UC System
Assign Skill-building Essay #1 (Personal Insight Question Choice 1)

WEEK 4: 29 September

Weekly Composition Book Entry
!!Campus Tour!!

Submit by Monday by 11:59pm:
Skill-building Essay #1 (Personal Insight Question Choice 1)

WEEK 5: 6 October

Weekly Composition Book Entry
Time Management

WEEK 6: 13 October

!!NO CLASS! COLUMBUS/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY!!

Submit by Monday by 11:59pm:

Skill-building Essay #2 (Personal Insight Question Choice 2)

WEEK 7: 20 October

Weekly Composition Book Entry

Workshop Essays 1 and 2

WEEK 8: 27 October

Weekly Composition Book Entry

!!Presentation about Study Abroad Opportunities by Study Abroad Representatives!!

Submit by Monday by 11:59pm:

Skill-building Essay #3 (Personal Insight Question Choice 3)

WEEK 9: 3 November

Weekly Composition Book Entry

!!Presentation about Financial Aid by Associate Director of Financial Aid @PLNU!!

WEEK 10: 10 November

!!NO CLASS! VETERAN'S DAY HOLIDAY!!

Submit by Monday by 11:59pm:

Skill-building Essay #4 (Personal Insight Question Choice 4)

WEEK 11: 17 November

Weekly Composition Book Entry

Workshop Essays 3 and 4

WEEK 12: 24 November

!!NO CLASS! THANKSGIVING RECESS!! Happy Thanksgiving!!!

WEEK 13: 1 December

(Meet at Ryan Library – Computer Lab)

Weekly Composition Book Entry
How to Write Scholarship Essays
Portfolio Preparation

WEEK 14: 8 December

(Meet at Ryan Library – Computer Lab)

Weekly Composition Book Entry
How to Write Scholarship Essays
Portfolio Preparation

WEEK 15: 15 December – FINAL EXAM

Mandatory Attendance:

Monday, 15 December – **Portfolio Due in Class (All Skill-building Essays Revised)**
Final Exam