

WRI 6020: Writing Across the Genres

Fall 2025 Course Policies

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Section 1 (M 4:00 PM-6:45 PM, BAC 156)
3 Units / LJWL Department

Professor: *Robbie Maakestad*
Office: *Bond Academic Center, 119*
Office Hours: *By appointment*

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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

WRI 5020/6020 is an advanced introduction and overview of creative writing (including practice in writing and workshopping poetry, fiction, and nonfiction).

WRI 6020 LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who complete WRI 5020/6020 will be able to:

1. identify advanced craft techniques in a variety of works across genres;
2. craft and employ advanced techniques specific to genre to create descriptive and evocative language in multiple genres (fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction);
3. create rounded characters and descriptions through a variety of points of view in multiple genres;
4. develop tension and/or change over the course of the text as appropriate to genre;
5. format texts in a genre-appropriate and professional manner for submission to workshop and publication;
6. present written work to live audiences, demonstrating advanced strategies for audience engagement and oral communication.

DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

In order to best reach our chosen audiences via 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. Grow our understanding of and learn to better 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. Collaborate in workshop, and individually after those workshops, in order to explore and practice the discipline of revision.
6. Practice presenting our work to an audience of readers and of listeners.

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 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

- Poetry Project – 150 points
- Nonfiction Project – 150 points
- Fiction Project – 150 points
- Workshop Critiques – 400 points
- Pedagogy Presentation – 150 points

TOTAL = 1000 points

REQUIRED TEXTS

Beard: A Memoir of Marriage by Kelly Foster Lundquist, ISBN: 9780802884732
Best American Essays 2018, ed. David Atwan and Hilton Als, ISBN: 9780544817340
Best American Poetry 2022, ed. David Lehman and Matthew Zapruder, ISBN: 9781982186685
Best American Short Stories 2022, ed. Heidi Pitlor and Andrew Sean Greer, ISBN: 9780358664710
Rose by Li-Young Lee, ISBN: 9780918526533
Knock at the Sky by Liz Charlotte Grant, ISBN: 9780802883759
Tenth of December by George Saunders, ISBN: 9780812984255
The Death and Life of August Sweeney by Samuel Ashworth, ISBN: 9781951631413
Unalone by Jessica Jacobs, ISBN: 9781954245822
Yellowface by R. F. Kuang, ISBN: 9780063250857 (recommended read ahead of her visit)

Please purchase tickets to attend the evening event with R. F. Kuang here using the student code PLNU25:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/r-f-kuang-discussing-katabasis-wdean-nelson-tickets-1359100579419>

Additionally, please purchase student tickets for Poetry Day (free, but ticketed) and this fall's four other evening M.A.W. Visiting Writers Events here:

<https://plnu.universitytickets.com/>

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.

CANVAS SUPPORT

If you have questions about the content you find in my Canvas course or need clarification on assignment instructions, please let me know. If you are unsure how to use any given feature in Canvas you will find the [Canvas Guides](#) to be a very helpful resource. If you cannot access something in my Canvas course or it appears that some part of the course is not working properly, please contact the Office of Instructional Technology for support at oit@pointloma.edu. Include specific information in the request (course ID, section, assignment or module name, etc.) to expedite the troubleshooting process. Screenshots are super helpful!

PLNU EMAIL

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

TECHNOLOGY

Refrain from using technology during class time unless a classroom activity calls for it to be used. This means cell phones, laptops, iPads, and other electronic devices. Taking notes by hand has been shown to aid long-term comprehension much more so than typing notes, so by all means, *please take handwritten notes* in class.

Similarly, laptops should not be utilized during workshop class periods, except by the writer whose work is being discussed. There's an extensive pedagogy surrounding the workshop process – though it may seem old school, in-class comments written on the hard copy draft and on a printed copy of the workshop critique letter have been shown to result in better learning outcomes for writers as they discuss and critique writing. This also eliminates technological distractions during workshop discussion: how lucky are we as writers to gather around written work and discuss it free from screens throughout the workshop class period?

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. Therefore, regular attendance and participation in each course are minimal requirements. Attendance is mandatory on Workshop days and is factored into your Workshop grade. Participation in the Final Exam reading is also a requirement to pass this

course.

If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions (1 class period), the faculty member can issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent (2 class periods), the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an “F” grade.

Students who anticipate being absent should contact the instructor in advance for approval and make arrangements to complete the required coursework and/or alternative assignments assigned at the discretion of the instructor. Acceptance of late work is at the discretion of the instructor and does not waive attendance requirements.

Refer to [Academic Policies](#) for additional detail.

WORKSHOP

Workshop participation, feedback, and attendance is mandatory. Throughout the semester we will be reading and critiquing one another’s writing as a whole class. Turn in a typed copy of your critique to your classmate who is being workshopped. One page, single-spaced is standard for a workshop critique letter. The quality of your workshop critique letters will be graded. 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. 75% of your feedback should be constructive criticism and ideas for the writer to consider. If there are problems with feedback you receive, please contact me ASAP. 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. I respect you and truly believe that this class should allow you full creative freedom, so I leave all subject matter choices up to you. To that end, our class should function as a safe space: the content of student writing that’s workshopped in this class should stay in this class. If you are unsure/nervous about the content of your writing, feel free to discuss your ideas with me in advance.

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. 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 or content that is intellectually, emotionally, or spiritually challenging, I encourage you to discuss with me. Class content is assigned for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual and written craft abilities, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

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.

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.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

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 [Graduate Academic and General Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY

If it is part of your creative process, you are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski, etc.) in this course, but before you turn in your draft, please speak to me about how you plan to use this tool in your work.

Any work that utilizes AI-based tools must be clearly identified as such, including the specific tool(s) used. For example, if you use ChatGPT, you must cite ChatGPT including the version number, year, month and day of the query and the statement "Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>."

Further, you must include with your draft the sequential prompts and methodology that you used to generate the creative piece so that the other students can see how it was utilized in your writing process. Failure to indicate AI as part of the work will be considered plagiarism.

It is important that you protect your colleagues' intellectual property. Critiques of your colleagues' works may not be done with the help of AI. Providing AI with samples of your colleagues' works will result in an F in this course.

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 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.

CENTER FOR ENRICHING RELATIONSHIPS

PLNU graduate students are able to receive *free* face-to-face and telehealth counseling services through the Master of Arts in Clinical Counseling program (MACC). This service is provided

by supervised therapists-in-training at the Center for Enriching Relationships. To contact the Center for Enriching Relationships, please call 619-858-3105 or visit <https://www.enrichingrelationships.org/plnu-macc> to submit an online request. Your inquiry is confidential. Please note that once the form is submitted it may take up to two days to process and respond to your request.

If you need emergency assistance, please call 911 or the Access and Crisis Line at (888) 724-7240.

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 writing 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.

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.

For this course, the final will be a required in-class reading from your favorite final project revision during the final exam. Our final exam time is **Monday, December 15, 7:00-10:00pm**. Since the final is a class activity, it cannot be rescheduled, so make sure that you will be able to attend. You must attend and read at the final exam reading to pass this class.

LETTER GRADE GUIDELINES

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

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 Fiction Reading Week

09/01 – NO CLASS – LABOR DAY (start reading for next week tho!)

Week 2 Fiction

09/08 – George Saunders' *Tenth of December* (272 pages)
Best American Short Stories 2022, Foreword, Intro & pgs. 1-152
Recommended read: R.F. Kuang's *Yellowface*

MAW Visiting Writers Series

9/11 – **Afternoon Event:** R.F. Kuang, Latter 101, 3PM
Evening Reading: R.F. Kuang, Brown Chapel 6:30PM
Buy Ticket ASAP: <https://shorturl.at/zan7z>
Code: PLNU25 for a \$6.24 PLNU student ticket

Week 3 Fiction

09/15 – Samuel Ashworth's *The Death and Life of August Sweeney*
Best American Short Stories 2022, pgs. 153-End
Fiction Workshop A & B Drafts Due Before Class

Week 4 Workshop

09/22 – **Fiction Workshop A**
Peer Critiques Due in Class
Pedagogy Presentation 1

Week 5 Workshop

09/29 – **Fiction Workshop B**
Peer Critiques Due in Class
Pedagogy Presentation 2

MAW Visiting Writers Series

10/02 – **Afternoon Event:** Samuel Ashworth, Fermanian
Conference Center, 3PM
Evening Reading: Samuel Ashworth, Fermanian
Conference Center, 7PM
Buy Ticket ASAP: <https://plnu.universitytickets.com/>

Week 6 Nonfiction

10/06 – Liz Charlotte Grant's *Knock at the Sky*, pgs. ix-114
Best American Essays 2018, Foreword, Intro & pgs. 1-126
Fiction Project Due
Pedagogy Presentation 3

Week 7 Nonfiction

	10/13 –	Liz Charlotte Grant’s <i>Knock at the Sky</i> , pgs. 115-201(End) <i>Best American Essays 2018</i> , pgs. 127-End <u>Nonfiction Workshop A & B Drafts Due Before Class</u> Pedagogy Presentation 4
Week 8	Workshop	
	10/20 –	Nonfiction Workshop A <u>Peer Critiques Due in Class</u> Pedagogy Presentation 5
Week 9	Workshop	
	10/27 –	10am-1pm class in BAC Larry Finger Lounge Nonfiction Workshop B <u>Peer Critiques Due in Class</u>
MAW Visiting Writers Series		
	10/27 –	Afternoon Event: Mitch Albom, Latter 101, 3PM Evening Reading: Mitch Albom, Brown Chapel, 7PM Buy Ticket ASAP: Details TBD
MAW Visiting Writers Series		
	10/29 –	Afternoon Event: Liz Charlotte Grant, Fermanian Conference Center, 3PM Evening Reading: Liz Charlotte Grant, Fermanian Conference Center, 7PM Buy Ticket ASAP: https://plnu.universitytickets.com/
Week 10	Poetry	
	11/03 –	Li-Young Lee’s <i>Rose</i> <u>Nonfiction Project Due</u> Pedagogy Presentation 6
Week 11	Poetry	
	11/10 –	Jessica Jacob’s <i>Unalone</i> , pgs. 1-79 (read notes pgs. 167-186 alongside poems) <i>Best American Poetry 2022</i> , Foreword, Intro & pgs. 1-91 Pedagogy Presentation 7
Week 12	Poetry	
	11/17 –	Jessica Jacob’s <i>Unalone</i> , pgs. 80-End (read notes pgs. 167-186 alongside poems) <i>Best American Poetry 2022</i> , pgs. 92-End Pedagogy Presentation 8
Poetry Day		
	11/20 –	Poetry Day Afternoon Event: Jessica Jacobs, Fermanian

Conference Center, 3PM

Poetry Day Evening Reading: Jessica Jacobs, Fermanian
Conference Center, 7PM

Buy Free Ticket ASAP: <https://plnu.universitytickets.com/>

Week 13

11/24 –

Kelly Foster Lundquist's *Beard: A Memoir of Marriage*

Poetry Workshop A & B Drafts Due to Hand Out at Class
Pedagogy Presentation 9

Week 14 Nonfiction

12/01 –

Poetry Workshop A

Peer Critiques Due in Class

Pedagogy Presentation 10

Last day to turn in your Pedagogy Presentation lesson plan.

MAW Visiting Writers Series

12/03 –

Afternoon Event: Kelly Foster Lundquist, Fermanian
Conference Center, 3PM

Evening Reading: Kelly Foster Lundquist, Fermanian
Conference Center, 7PM

Buy Ticket ASAP: <https://plnu.universitytickets.com/>

Week 15 Workshop

12/08 –

Poetry Workshop B

Peer Critiques Due in Class

Week 16 Final Exam: Winter Reading

12/15 –

FINAL EXAM PERIOD: 7:00-10:00 PM: Winter Reading
Mid-City Church of the Nazarene

Poetry Project 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.