



LJWL Department

## English 2020 – Intro to Creative Writing

3 Units

*Spring 2026*

**Meeting days/times (TR 9:30 am – 10:45 am)**

**Meeting location (Bond Academic Center (BAC) 156)**

**Final Exam: (Tuesday, 5/5, 10:30 – 1:00 pm)**

INFORMATION	SPECIFICS FOR THE COURSE
Instructor title and name:	Professor Josiah Roberts
Phone:	N/A
Email:	<a href="mailto:josiahroberts@pointloma.edu">josiahroberts@pointloma.edu</a> ( <b>NOT</b> <a href="mailto:josiahroberts000@pointloma.edu">josiahroberts000@pointloma.edu</a> – inactive email)
Office location and hours:	BAC 126, By appointment TR 2:30 – 5:00 pm

### 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

This course serves as a general introduction and overview of creative writing.

### Program and Course Learning Outcomes

In order to create an introduction to 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. Gain an understanding of and learn to 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 the creation of that literature.
5. Work together in small-group workshops, and individually after those workshops, in order to explore and practice the discipline of revision.

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 writing, and four finished writing projects (along with four critical analyses): a submission in each of the three genres (fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry) and one final revision project (your choice). Class time will be divided accordingly: lecture and discussion, small group discussion, in-class writing, and small group and whole-class workshops.

Major assignments:

- Creative Nonfiction Project – 100 points (Grade to be kept only if your final project is NOT nonfiction) + 50 points Critical Analysis
- Fiction Project – 100 points (Grade to be kept only if your final project is NOT fiction) + 50 points Critical Analysis
- Poetry Project – 100 points (Grade to be kept only if your final project is NOT poetry) + 50 points Critical Analysis
- Lit. Journal Presentation and Paper – 100 points (50 points per component)
- Craft Moves – 190 points (10 points per day)
- Writing Event Reflection – 55 points
- Workshops and Critique Letters – 105 points (Workshops and Critique Letters = 15 points/day)
- Radical Revision Final Project – 100 points (these 100 points also replace one provisional creative project grade as noted above); 50 points Critical Analysis

**TOTAL = 1000 points**

## Required Texts and Recommended Study Resources

Students are responsible for having the required course textbooks prior to the first day of class.

All supplemental materials posted on this course site (including articles, book excerpts, or other documents) are provided for your personal academic use. These materials may be protected by copyright law and should not be duplicated or distributed without permission of the copyright owner.

### Required Text:

Burroway, Janet. *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft*. 4th ed. Boston: Longman, 2014.  
ISBN: 9780134053240.

### Preparation

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

## Assessment and Grading

Grades will be based on the following:

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-

## 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. In particular I will look for:

- Adherence to and mastery of 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.

## 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.

For this course, the final will be an in-class reading from your final project during the final exam. Our scheduled final exam time is Tuesday, December 16, 10:30am-1:00pm. Since the final is a class activity, it cannot be rescheduled, so make sure that you will be able to attend.

## **Subject Matter**

This course will ask you to write whatever you want to write about, but do recognize that there is a line between what is appropriate and not appropriate in a classroom setting, especially with regard to what is being shared with your classmates, who may not share your values. I respect your privacy and truly believe that this class should allow you creative freedom, so all I will ask is that you use common sense with regard to what is/is not appropriate to write in an academic setting. If you are unsure/nervous or have a hunch that something might be questionable, please discuss your ideas with me in advance of bringing them to workshop.

### **[ONLY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES MAJORS]**

At least one of your creative projects this semester needs to connect topically to environmental concerns.

## **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.

### **PLNU Email**

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

### **Technology**

You will be expected to refrain from using cell phones or other communication devices in the classroom. Use of iPads and laptops should be limited to times when I ask you to pull out your computers for in class use and in-class writing. Even if it seems that it isn't "bothering anyone," checking your e-mail, your Facebook, or surfing the web during class is rude to your instructor and fellow classmates and will count against your participation grade. I expect you to be an engaged member of the class.

## **Attendance and “Craft Moves”**

In order to learn most effectively and get as much as you can out of this course, in addition to your participation grade, I expect regular attendance. Let me know if you do have to miss a class, and we can work something out. **Attendance is required for workshops. Absences on such days will hurt your workshop grade.** Missed in-class work may not be made up. It is also your responsibility to get workshop drafts to and from those in your group. Craft moves are worth 190 points, and should be turned in each class period when readings have been assigned.

## **Workshop**

Workshop participation and attendance is mandatory and is worth 15 points per class period. Throughout the semester we will be reading and critiquing one another’s essays in small groups and 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. See above for workshop grade specifics.

## **Incompletes and Late Assignments**

All major assignments and workshop drafts must be printed out and turned in hard-copy during the class period on the day they are due, in addition to being turned in on Canvas. 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 (this includes craft moves). I will accept the major projects one class period late, but your paper will be penalized one letter grade (A<sup>-</sup> B 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.

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.

For first draft workshop writing assignments, not only will I be reading your work, but so will your peers. Because of this, there will be no exception of late work for these unless brought to my attention beforehand.

## **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 you 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 distance education outside 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**

In order 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.

### **PLNU 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. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy**

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc.) is **strictly** prohibited in this course for **any** aspect of your work, **including idea generation, drafting, editing, or final submissions**. This course is designed to assess your independent

critical thinking, creative writing, research and revision skills without the assistance of AI technologies. Violations of this policy will be treated as breaches of academic integrity.

### **PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy**

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). 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 619-849-2533). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. Professors are able to view a student's approved accommodations through Accommodate.

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. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

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. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any accommodations.

### **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.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination, you can find more information on reporting and resources at [www.pointloma.edu/nondiscrimination](http://www.pointloma.edu/nondiscrimination).

## **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](http://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](mailto:counselingservices@pointloma.edu) or find a list of campus pastors at [pointloma.edu/Title-IX](http://pointloma.edu/Title-IX).

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at [www.pointloma.edu/bias](http://www.pointloma.edu/bias)

## **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.

## **Asynchronous Attendance/Participation Definition**

A day of attendance in asynchronous content is determined as contributing a substantive note, assignment, discussion, or submission by the posted due date. Failure to meet these standards will result in an absence for that day. In the event that class is canceled, I reserve the right to assign homework to accommodate for not meeting in-person.

## **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](#)

- [Website](#)
- Email: [writingcenter@pointloma.edu](mailto:writingcenter@pointloma.edu)

### **Lomabooks Instructions for Students:**

*This course is part of our course material delivery program, **LomaBooks**. The bookstore will provide each student with a convenient package containing all required physical materials; all digitally delivered materials will be integrated into Canvas.*

*You should have received an email from the bookstore confirming the list of materials that will be provided for each of your courses and asking you to select how you would like to receive any printed components (in-store pick up or home delivery). If you have not done so already, please confirm your fulfillment preference so the bookstore can prepare your materials.*

*For more information about **LomaBooks**, please go: [HERE](#)*

### **Course Schedule**

\*\* All readings denoted with page numbers and not posted on Canvas is from your required text

#### **Week 1 Course Introduction and Intro to Creative Nonfiction (CNF) / Voice in CNF**

01/13 – In Class: Syllabus; Art and Craft.

*Readings Due:*

Watch: [Abandon The Idea Of Being Good And Just Try](#)

01/15 – In Class: Fundamentals of Creative Writing Overview

*Readings Due:*

“Creative Nonfiction” pgs. 225-236

“The Book of My Life” – Alexander Hemon, pgs. 109-111

[Canvas]:

“Tigers” – Eliot Weinberger

#### **Week 2 Voice in CNF; Point of View/I & Eye/Researched CNF**

01/20 – In Class: Voice in Creative Nonfiction; Project 1 Overview; Lit Journal Project Overview

*Readings Due:*

“Voice” pgs. 47-61

“Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self” – Alice Walker, pgs. 62-67

[Canvas]:

“Track Changes in English” – Kenneth Lee  
“A Scientific Analysis of Disney Movie Sidekicks Through The Lens Of Hip Hop” – Hanif Abdurraqib

01/22 – In Class: Point of View/I & Eye

*Readings Due:* (this might change, they were chosen as readings for 9/11 next semester, but we may use them again)

[*Canvas*]:

“Falling Man” – Tom Junod

“Leap” – Brian Doyle

“Fear In Two Winters” – Hanif Abdurraqib

Week 3 **Personal Essays, Image in CNF, and Researched Essays**

01/27 – In Class: Researched CNF Essays (Robbie Maakested visit)

*Readings Due:*

[*Canvas*]:

“Jumbo II” – Elena Passarello

“An Indian in Yoga Class--Find Imbalance” – Rajpreet Heir

01/29 – In Class: Structure in CNF; Discuss Workshop Procedure

*Readings Due:*

[*Canvas*]:

“Time and Distance Overcome” – Eula Biss

“Capturing Dementia’s Voice: Postwar Memories Under Siege” – Liesel Hamilton

Week 4 **Image and Structure in CNF**

02/03 – In Class: Concrete vs. Abstract Images, and Elane Johnson

**Group A Nonfiction Drafts Due**

*Readings Due:*

“Image” pgs. 15-27

“Heaven and Earth in Jest” – Annie Dillard, pgs. 28-29

“Standing By” – David Sedaris, pgs. 29-33

“At the Dam” – Joan Didion, pgs. 148-150

*Group A Nonfiction Drafts Due*

02/05 – In Class: Suspense and Mystery; Dialogue

**Group B Nonfiction Drafts Due**

*Readings Due:*

“Me vs. Animals” pgs. 112 - 117

“The Female Body” – Margaret Atwood, pgs. 245-247

[*Canvas*]:

“The Wishbone” – Harrison Scott Key

Week 5      **Workshop**

02/10 –      **Workshop Group A — Attendance Required**  
**Group A Critique Letters Due**

02/12 –      **Workshop Group B — Attendance Required**  
**Group B Critique Letters Due**

Week 6      **Intro to Fiction and Character in Fiction**

02/17 –      In Class: Introduction to Fiction; Project 2  
Overview

**Project 1—Creative Nonfiction Due**

*Readings Due:*

“Fiction” pgs. 259-270

“Incarnations of Burned Children” – David Foster Wallace, pgs.  
179-181

[*Canvas*]:

“Night After Night” – Eddie Matthews

02/19 –      In Class: Character in Fiction (Kirby Visit)

*Readings Due:*

“Character” pgs. 94-109

[*Canvas*]:

“Hills Like White Elephants” – Ernest Hemingway

“I Help You” – Vonetta Young

“They’re Made Out of Meat” – Terry Bison

“Writing the Other” – Shawl Ward

Week 7      **Voice and Setting in Fiction**

02/24 –      In Class: Voice in Fiction

*Readings Due:*

“Voice” pgs. 47-61 (Review)

“Victor Lap” pgs. 69-82

“Girl” pgs. 38-39

“The School” pgs. 150-153

02/26 –      In Class: Fictional Setting (Eddie Matthews Visit)

*Readings Due:*

[*Canvas*]:

“Tepeyac” – Sandra Cisneros

“Night After Night” - Eddie Matthews  
“Fictional Setting” - Janet Burroway

Week 8      **Story and Image in Fiction**

03/03 –      In Class: Story in Fiction

*Readings Due:*

“Story” pgs. 166-175

“The Werewolf” – Angela Carter, pgs. 153-154

“Bigfoot Stole My Wife” – Ron Carlson, pgs. 290-294

[*Canvas*]:

“Roller Coaster House” – Kyle Seibel

03/05 –      Undecided

**Group A & B Fiction Workshop Drafts Due**

Week 9      **Spring Break**

Week 10     **Fiction Workshop**

03/17 –      **Workshop Group A—Attendance Required**  
**Group A Critique Letters Due**

03/19 –      **Group B Workshop—Attendance Required**  
**Group B Critique Letters Due**

Week 11     **Introduction to Poetry and Setting and Story in Poetry**

03/24 –      In class: **Katie Manning** visit and Introduction to Poetry

**Project 2—Fiction Due**

*Readings Due:*

“Poetry” pgs. 297-317

Assorted poems and Poetry Format – pgs. 318-326

03/26 –      In Class: Setting & Story in poetry; discuss readings

*Readings Due:*

“Setting” pgs. 135-148

Assorted poems – pgs. 154-157

“Story” pgs. 166-175 (review—come to class with questions)

Assorted poems – pgs. 187-189

Week 12     **Voice and Setting in Poetry**

03/31 – In Class: Voice & Setting in Poetry

*Readings Due:*

“Voice” pgs. 47-61 (review—come to class with questions)

Assorted poems – pgs. 85-88

04/02 – Easter Break (no class)

Week 13 **Poetry and Workshop**

04/07 – In Class: Character in Poetry; discuss readings; discuss Lit Journal Report

**Group A Workshop Drafts Due**

*Readings Due:*

“Character” pgs. 94-109

Assorted poems – pgs. 127-130

[*Canvas*]:

“A Man in Love with Plants” – Jenny Mitchell

04/09 – In Class: Discuss Readings

**Group B Poetry Workshop Drafts Due**

*Readings Due:*

Poetry Packet (handed out in class)

Week 14 **Workshop**

04/14 – **Poetry Workshop Group A—Attendance Required**  
**Critique Letters Due for Group A**  
**Group C Poetry Workshop Drafts Due**

04/16 – **Poetry Workshop Group B—Attendance Required**  
**Critique Letters Due for Group B**

Week 15 **Workshop and Presentations**

04/21 – **Poetry Workshop Group C—Attendance Required**  
**Critique Letters Due for Group C**

04/23 – **Lit. Journal Presentations—Attendance Required**

**Project 3—Poetry Due (if you will revise the Poetry Project for the Final Revision/Expansion Project)**!

Week 16 **Presentations and Submitting to Literary Journals**

04/28 – In Class: Revision and Expansion, discuss the Final Revision Project

**Project 3—Poetry Due (if you will revise the Poetry Project for the Final Revision/Expansion Project)**

Readings due:  
“Development and Revision” pgs. 195-218

04/30 – **Lit. Journal Presentations—Attendance Required**

In Class: Submitting to Lit Journals  
**Lit. Journal Report Due**

Week 17 **Final: Reading from Final Radical Revision Project**

05/05 – FINAL EXAM PERIOD: 10:30am-1:00pm: Reading from Final Revision Project

**Project 4—Radical Revision 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.