



Department of Literature, Journalism, Writing, and Languages
School of Humanities, Arts, and Public Engagement

ENG 4085 – The Novel (Independent Study)

3 Units

Spring 2026

Meeting days/times: Mondays 1:10-2:15

Meeting location: Faculty Offices

Final Exam: TBD

Instructor title and name:	Dr. Schuyler Eastin	Dr. Bettina Pedersen
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Office location and hours:	Bond Academic Center 122 (and Zoom upon request: https://pointloma.zoom.us/my/seastin2) M 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, TTh 9:00 - 11:00 am, and by appointment	Bond Academic Center 116 Mondays 3:00-4:00 or by appointment (F2F or Zoom)

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

An advanced study of representative examples of the novel. Selected novels may include both novels written in English and novels translated into English.

Extended course description:

For this novel course we will give some attention to the development of the novel from the late 18th to the 21st centuries. We will consider the ways in which the novel both reflects and shapes the cultures that produce it, especially the conventions and expectations it both creates and breaks. We will develop skill in close reading, requiring literary and cultural analysis as well as sustained annotation.

Program and Course Learning Outcomes

At the Conclusion of the Course Students will be able to:

1. Closely read and critically analyze texts in their original languages and/or in translation.
2. Recall, identify, and use fundamental concepts of literary study to read and discuss texts
 - a. Standard literary terminology
 - b. Modes/genres of literature
 - c. Elements of literary genres
 - d. Literary periods (dates, writers, characteristics, and important developments)
 - e. Contemporary critical approaches
 - f. Extra-literary research
3. Analyze the social, cultural, ethnic, gendered, and/or historical contexts of the works and their authors, and connect the texts with their own lives.
4. Create detailed and informed textual analysis of literary works that examine several of the fundamental concepts of literary study.

Assessment and Grading

This course will employ a standard point-based grading system. Each assignment carries a weighted value toward the final grade based on the assignments detailed below.

Detailed instructions for each assignment will be provided in Canvas, including the rubric that will be used to assess it.

Some assignments will involve development exercises that will require you to be present for workshoping and/or to incorporate feedback into the final revision.

Grading Scale

Grades in this course will be determined out of a total 1000 points:

A	1000-930
A-	929-900
B+	899-870
B	869-830
B-	829-800
C+	799-770
C	769-730
C-	729-700
D	699-600
F	Less than 600

Assignments At-a-Glance*

All assignments listed below are required. Further details for each assignment will be provided in Canvas:

- Literary Review (300 points) This review will be due midway through the semester. It will require you to develop a creative and/or critical approach to evaluating one of the novels you've read up to that point. In addition to thoughtfully and carefully examining the text itself, you will be

making critical choices about your principles for evaluation, target audience, and visual presentation.

- Research paper (500 points) This paper will be due during finals week as the concluding project for the course. As a traditional term paper, this will require careful and well-developed argumentative analysis of one of the novels you've supported by thorough scholarly research.
- Oral Examination (200 points) This exam, to be administered as a concluding conversation during Finals Week, will serve to help you reflect on and demonstrate your understanding of the novel as a literary form.

Incompletes and Late Assignments

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.

Content Warning*

Each of us comes to PLNU with our own unique life experiences that frame the way we perceive information. In this course we will cover a variety of topics, all of which has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. Each time an intellectually challenging topic appears in a reading, the course schedule will contain this Content Warning superscript: ^{CW}. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual and compassionate engagement in the human story, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

Trigger Warning*

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 excuse yourself from the discussion of a certain topic, keep in mind that class topics and material are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in literary study. You are still responsible for the material, but we can discuss alternative methods for accessing that material and for assessing your learning. In either case, I will remain committed to supporting you throughout your learning in this course.

PLNU 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](#).

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

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy*

I recognize that Generative Artificial Intelligence is having a significant impact on how we communicate, write, and conduct research, especially in the modern university. AI presents a number of compelling opportunities that promise to streamline our workflows and save us time but also represents an equal number of intellectual pitfalls. If the final product of our labor were all that mattered, the choice of whether or not to use AI would be quite literally a no-brainer. However, [in higher education the final product is rarely as important as your ability to work the process it took to produce it](#). In this class, the written assignments you submit are merely artifacts of the intellectual labor you've performed while reading and thinking about some very difficult texts.

This is not to say ours will be an AI-prohibitive class. In fact, there are certain situations in which the use and discussion of AI tools could be relevant to our course content. In fact, we may employ a number of these tools in specific ways throughout the semester. However, *substituting* your own intellectual labor with the nonintellectual work of an AI undermines the objectives of this course and the purpose of higher education and for this reason is highly discouraged.

All written assignments are required to contain a single-sentence AI statement describing how you used AI to produce the assignment. This includes but is not limited to: brainstorming, content generation, editing/proofreading etc. You should also provide a [proper MLA citation](#) for the AI tool you used. If you did *not* use AI, simply state: "I did not use AI on this assignment."

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 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.

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 <http://pointloma.edu/Title-IX> or as shown in the PLNU Spiritual Care section of this syllabus.

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

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

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.

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.

Students who anticipate being absent for an entire week of a course 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.

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

Additional Policies*

Independent Study As an independent study, the burden is on you to keep up with the reading, to develop compelling questions and analytical approaches to bring to each tutorial meeting, and to seek answers to those questions both during weekly meetings and on your own through additional outside-of-class research.

No Canvas Communication and assignment submissions will be exchanged via email and through our designated Google Chat space (ENG 4085 SP26 IS) rather than through Canvas.

*All policies marked with an asterisk above are unique to this course and should be reviewed carefully.

READING/ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

The texts required for this course are listed in the schedule below. Any unabridged editions are acceptable. Since some readings are quite lengthy you are advised to acquire your copies of these texts as early as possible and to divide your reading appropriately according to the number of weeks/meetings allotted for each.

Dates	Reading	Originally Published	Key Features	Faculty Covering
January 26 February 2 February 9	Laurence Sterne's <i>Tristram Shandy</i>	1759	Convention-breaking	Dr. Eastin
February 16 February 23	Emily Brontë's <i>Wuthering Heights</i>	1847	Gothic, embedded narratives (shifting perspectives), psychological	Dr. Pedersen
March 2	Virginia Woolf's <i>Orlando</i>	1928	Gender fluidity, genre categories & definitions: biography, fiction	Dr. Pedersen
March 16	Shirley Jackson's <i>The Haunting of Hill House</i>	1959	Gothic horror subgenre, psychological	Dr. Eastin
March 23	Ursula Le Guin's <i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i> Be sure to read the "Author's Note" as well	1969	Science fiction subgenre, political intrigue, gender fluidity	Dr. Eastin
March 30	Marjane Satrapi's <i>Persepolis</i>	2004	Graphic Novel, bildungsroman, theocratic oppression, definitions of modernity	Dr. Pedersen
April 13 April 20	N.K. Jemisin's <i>The Fifth Season</i>	2016	Fantasy subgenre, racial in/justice	Dr. Eastin
April 27	Sarah Winman's <i>Tin Man</i>	2017	Realism, nonlinear narrative structure, AIDS epidemic, fathers & sons	Dr. Pedersen
Final time TBD	Oral Exam			Drs. Eastin and Pedersen