



A silver Greek tetradrachm, a coin depicting the owl of Athena,
goddess of wisdom and learning

ENG 4095 – Literary Theory and Scholarship

3 Units

Spring 2026

Meeting days/times: Tuesdays/Thursdays 3:00-4:15 pm

Meeting location: Bond Academic Center (BAC) 102

Final Exam: Thursday 5/7 4:30-7:00 pm

Instructor title and name:	Dr. Schuyler Eastin
Phone:	619-849-2695 (LJWL Office)
Email:	seastin2@pointloma.edu
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

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

In this capstone course, students are expected to engage in research and in written critical work. Students demonstrate their academic growth and scholarship by building a portfolio of writing specific to their studies in English education, literature, and/or writing.

Program Learning Outcomes

Students who complete the program in English - concentrations in English Education, Literature, and Writing, will be able to:

1. Integrate literary studies and/or craft development with ongoing reflection and hospitable engagement with a diverse world. (Integrative Learning, Foundation Skills for Lifelong Learning)
2. Analyze and critique diverse forms and genres of literature situated within historical and cultural contexts. (Critical Thinking)
3. Employ strong research, close reading, and analytical skills in writing as appropriate for literary form and genre conventions. (Information Literacy, Critical Thinking)
4. Develop creative or analytical works in various forms of writing. (Written Communication)
5. Present creative and/or analytical writing to formal audiences, demonstrating strategies for audience engagement and oral communication. (Oral Communication)

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.

Required Texts and Recommended Study Resources

Booth, Wayne C. *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*. ISBN: 9780520062108

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. 2nd ed. Ed. Ross C. Murfin. *Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism*. ISBN: 9780312457532

Kuang, R.F. *Babel*. ISBN: 9780063021426

Stevens, Anne H. *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. ISBN: 9781554815371

Any other assigned readings will be made available via link or PDF in Canvas.

NOTE: Students are responsible to have the required course textbooks prior to the first day of class. Students are also encouraged to begin reading the books in preparation for the class as soon as possible.

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.

Rather than grading assignments on a rolling basis toward an accumulating total your final grade will be determined by the work collected in a final portfolio. This does NOT mean you can simply turn everything in at the end of the semester as participating in the development process is absolutely essential for ultimate success of your work. Additionally, participation in development will be a point on the grading rubric for these assignments.

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 detail on all assignments will be posted in Canvas:

- Theory Reports (2 at 100 points each): these reports will require you to conduct additional reading on theorists/philosophers mentioned in our reading of Stevens' book and to make your best effort to apply it to *Heart of Darkness* in a workshop setting.
- Theory Application Essay 200 points: this shorter essay will require you to select a literary theory and apply it at length to Kuang's *Babel*.
- Professional Preparation 100 points: this will involve various preparation exercises including developing a resume/CV and cover letter, generating an online professional profile, working with campus Career Services, and contemplating your future vocation.

- Portfolio Assignments
 - Reflective Essay 100 points: a shorter reflection on your experiences as an English major and your conclusions on the value of an education in the humanities.
 - Research Paper 300 points: a larger research paper on a literary text of your choice that makes extensive use of a literary theory we covered in the first half of the semester.
 - Oral Presentation 100 points: a presentation of an abridged version of your Research Paper to be delivered at the Literature on Point event at the conclusion of the semester.

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 a potentially triggering topic appears in a reading, the course schedule will contain this Content Warning superscript: ^{CW}.

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

Seminar format: As a seminar course at the graduate level, what you get out of this class is entirely dependent on your thorough preparation and active participation. Expect to complete all assigned readings with active and forward-thinking annotation strategies by the time class begins each week. Expect also to make frequent and active contributions to class discussions by asking and answering questions, collaborating with peers, and demonstrating a critical engagement with the reading. This does not mean you must come to class having mastered or completely understood the reading but that you’re prepared to work with our critical community to get your own questions answered and to help others do the same.

Our class should be a space for productive discussion, supportive collaboration, and performative expression. It is each student’s responsibility to:

- Be open to trying out new ideas and pushing the boundaries of your experience
- Recognize and be supportive of the fact that your peers are doing the same

This doesn't mean we will shy away from disagreement or debate. Quite the contrary: we should be open to questioning and challenging each other, provided we always do so in a way that fosters growth.

Role/approach in your degree program: This course will largely operate as a true seminar course. This means that a great deal of our class time will be spent collaboratively working through difficult material and the work done outside of class will produce well-polished critical analysis informed by responsible scholarly research. The success of our collaborative time will depend entirely on your thorough and thoughtful preparation. Expect to hold each other accountable for completing the readings and written assignments on time.

READING/ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to changes and additions throughout the semester so please be prepared to note any changes or regularly download the most current version from Canvas. Links to online material can be found here and in Canvas. All PDFs are posted to Canvas.

Week	Day	Reading	Activity/Due
1	January 13	Course Introduction	
	January 15	Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> pp. 3-46 ^{CW: racism, slavery, murder}	
2	January 20	Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> pp. 46-99 ^{CW: racism, slavery, murder}	
	January 22	Stevens, <i>Literary Theory and Criticism</i> chs. 1-2	Theory Reports (TRs)
3	January 27	Stevens, <i>Literary Theory and Criticism</i> ch. 4	TRs
	January 29	Stevens, <i>Literary Theory and Criticism</i> ch. 5	TRs
4	February 3	Stevens, <i>Literary Theory and Criticism</i> ch. 6 Miller "Heart of Darkness Revisited" in <i>HoD</i> pp. 206-220	TRs
	February 5	Stevens, <i>Literary Theory and Criticism</i> ch. 7 Thomas "Preserving and Keeping Order by Killing Time in <i>Heart of Darkness</i> " in <i>HoD</i> pp. 239-257	TRs
5	February 10	Stevens, <i>Literary Theory and Criticism</i> ch. 8, pp. 198-220 Brantlinger "Heart of Darkness: Anti-Imperialism, Racism, or Impressionism?" in <i>HoD</i> pp. 277-296	TRs
	February 12	Stevens, <i>Literary Theory and Criticism</i> ch. 8, pp. 220-231 Smith "Too Beautiful Altogether" in <i>HoD</i> pp. 169-183 OR McIntire "The Women Do Not Travel: Gender, Difference, and Incommensurability in Conrad's <i>Heart of Darkness</i> " pp. 330-343	TRs
6	February 17	Stevens, <i>Literary Theory and Criticism</i> ch. 9 Brown "Cultural Psychosis on the Frontier: The Work of the Darkness in Joseph Conrad's <i>Heart of Darkness</i> " pp. 350-366	TRs
	February 19	Kuang, <i>Babel</i> chs. 1-5, pp. 3-103	
7	February 24	Kuang, <i>Babel</i> chs. 6-12, pp. 104-219	
	February 26	Kuang, <i>Babel</i> chs. 13-18, pp. 223-323	
8	March 3	Kuang, <i>Babel</i> chs. 19-24, pp. 327-429	
	March 6	Kuang, <i>Babel</i> chs. 25-Epilogue, pp 430-544	

	March 9-13	<i>Spring Break (no classes)</i>	
9	March 17	Theory Application Essay Workshop	Theory Application Essay
	March 19	Parker “We’ve Forgotten what College is For” Krislov “Why the Humanities Matter More than Ever”	
10	March 24	<i>Called</i> (PDF in Canvas, reading TBD), after reading, prepare a short list of questions for our guest speaker	Research Paper: Proposal
	March 26	<i>Called</i> (PDF in Canvas, reading TBD), after reading, prepare a short list of questions for our guest speaker	
11	March 31	Booth, <i>The Company We Keep</i> pp. 1-20	
	April 2	<i>Easter Recess (no class)</i>	
12	April 7	Booth, <i>The Company We Keep</i> pp. 25-44	Research Paper: Annotated Bibliography
	April 9	Booth, <i>The Company We Keep</i> pp. 125-153	
13	April 14	Career Services Day	Professional Preparation Assignments
	April 16	Booth, <i>The Company We Keep</i> pp. 159-166, 227-260	
14	April 21	Research Paper Workshop	Research Paper: Full Draft
	April 23	Booth, <i>The Company We Keep</i> pp. 375-416	
15	April 28	Booth, <i>The Company We Keep</i> pp. 421-435, 457-489	Reflective Essay
	April 30	TBD	
Finals	Thursday, May 7 4:30-7:00 pm	Literature on Point: Oral Presentations	Research Paper: Final Draft AND Portfolio