



Literature, Journalism, Writing, & Languages/  
 Point Loma Nazarene University  
 Literature 200: Contemporary Christian Writers  
 2 Units

Quad I ~ Fall~ 2018

<b>Meeting days:</b> Monday/Wednesday/Friday	<b>Instructor title and name:</b> Professor Kathryn Huff
<b>Meeting times:</b> 12:15-1:20pm	<b>Phone:</b> 619-672-9743
<b>Meeting location:</b> BAC 103	<b>E-mail:</b> kathrynhuff@pointloma.edu
<b>Final Exam:</b> Monday, October 15	<b>Office location and hours:</b> 1:30-2:30pm, MWF BAC 118, main campus

**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 is a study of representative works of literature and cultural contexts. In particular, we'll focus on contemporary *Christian* writers and *Christian* literature, exploring what we mean by the adjective *Christian* and the noun *literature* (high art that invites us to muse or popular genres that simply amuse?). We'll re-think how texts help us discover new ways to think about faith. We'll ask: does a writer's claim of faith mean that any writing produced automatically merits the imprimatur of literary critics? Should Christian writers be restricted to writing explicit depictions of the Gospel message? Can *non-Christians* write effective stories of grace and redemption? Finally, what *difference* are Christian writers making in the world today?



"Is there a doctor of literature in the house?"

*Art is a conversation*, and so I invite you to sit down and have an imaginative chat with our writers. We'll ask questions about the specific formal and stylistic conventions they use in particular literary and cultural contexts. We'll explore a variety of genres (several of our writers write in several genres): fiction, essay, poetry, creative non-fiction, screen, song, and comedy. We'll explore and reflect on the role that Christian faith plays in the texts and on the role that the texts play in our culture. You'll be asked to read closely, share your interpretations in class, write often, and form your own ideas in response to the literature we read together.

Together, we will think, write, and speak critically about literature *and* contemporary culture through the lens of Christian faith. And maybe, let's hope, the world will notice.

### REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES

1. This class will not use a formal textbook. Instead, we will create our own class anthology of *Contemporary Christian Writers*. Our anthology will be comprised of reading packets that I give you, readings you will download from Canvas and print out, and additional class-selected texts. It will be your responsibility to pick up reading packets and to download and print out assigned readings. You will need to read closely, making notes in the margins, underlining or highlighting, and commenting upon. Bring the reading packets to class the day listed on the schedule.
  2. Videos on Canvas.
  3. You will need a laptop, access to a working printer, and two notebooks. Bring your notebooks and laptop to every class period. One notebook will need a section to collect class readings and a section with college-ruled paper that you can use for in-class writing. I may collect some of these writings, so use a notebook you can rip pages from. The other notebook will be your reading journal. It can be of any size and of any binding type. Feel free to personalize it as you like. Two or three times during the quad, I will check your journal for completeness, but you will not need to remove any pages.
  4. Approximately \$15 to cover your printing costs. The copy center can print an essay for about \$.25. If you email your file in advance, you can pick up the next day.
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**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course will help you learn and apply key concepts and skills in literary studies so that you can engage in meaningful, transformative ways with the concept of faith in contemporary Christian literature. If you invest yourself fully, you should finish this course being able to:

Course Learning Outcomes	IDEA outcomes	Assessment of Learning
<p><b>1. Closely read (comprehension, analysis) and critically analyze (analysis) texts in their original languages and/or in translation. (GELO 1d, 2b) (PLO 2, 3, 4)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop skill in expressing yourself orally or in writing</li> <li>Analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view</li> </ul>	<p>CR &amp; TB Assignments Final Presentation Reading Journal Final Exam Class Discussion</p>
<p><b>2. Recall (knowledge), identify (knowledge), and use (application) fundamental concepts of literary study to read and discuss texts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Standard literary terminology</li> <li>b. Modes/genres of literature</li> <li>c. Elements of literary genres</li> <li>d. Literary periods (dates, writers, characteristics, and important developments)</li> <li>e. Extra-literary research (GELO 1d, 2b) (PLO 2, 3, 4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories)</li> </ul>	<p>Games CR &amp; TB Assignments Class Discussion Reading Journal Reading quizzes Final Presentation Final Exam</p>
<p><b>3. Connect (synthesis) the works with their own lives and with the social, cultural, and historical contexts of the works and their authors. (GELO 1d, 2b) (PLO 1)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)</li> <li>Gain a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.)</li> <li>Develop knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives, global awareness, or other cultures</li> <li>Develop creative capacities</li> </ul>	<p>Class Discussions CR &amp; TB Assignments Reading Journal Polls Reading Quizzes Final Presentation Final Exam</p>

**COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

WEEK	DATE	SCHEDULE	ASSIGNMENT DUE
1	8/28 8/29 8/31	Course introduction Poetry: Berry, Lee, Gioia, Wright, Mariani, Oliver— RQ 1 Poetry: Howe, Hudgins, Wiman, Nelson, Milosz—RQ 2	8/29 CR 1 8/31 CR 2
2	9/3 9/5 9/7	Labor Day—NO CLASS Short Story: Wallace, McDermott—RQ 3 Short Story: Adichie, Erdrich—RQ 4	9/5 CR 3 9/7 CR 4
3	9/10 9/12 9/14	Novel: <i>Lila</i> —RQ 5 Novel: <i>Lila</i> Novel: <i>Saints</i> —RQ 6	9/10 CR 5 9/12 CR 6 9/14 CR 7
4	9/17 9/19 9/21	TB Presentations Creative Non-fiction: Lamott, Lott, Johnson—RQ 7 Creative Non-fiction: Wiman, McBride—RQ 8	9/17 TB 1, Reading Journals 9/19 CR 8 9/21 CR 9
5	9/24 9/26 9/28	Essay: Robinson—RQ 9 Essay: Wiman, Berry Lyrics: TBA	9/24 CR 10 9/26 CR 12 9/28 CR 13
6	10/1 10/3 10/5	Screen: McDonough—RQ 10 Screen: In class watch <i>Three Billboards</i> Screen: In class watch <i>Three Billboards</i>	10/1 CR 14
7	10/8 10/10 10/12	Comedy: TBA; TB Presentations Final Presentations Final Presentations, Final Exam Review	10/8 CR 15 TB 2; Reading Journals Final Presentations per signups
8	10/15	Canvas Final Exam (online), Final Presentations	

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Assignment Categories	Grading Percentages	Grade scale:
Attendance/Engagement	10%	A=93-100 A-=92-90 B+=87-89 B=83-86 B-=80-82 C+=77-79 C=73-76 C-=70-72 D+=67-69 D=63-66 D-=60-62 F=0-59
Reading Journal	10%	
Reading Quizzes	10%	
Formal Writing Assignments	45%	
Final Presentation	15%	
Final Exam	10%	

**Assignment Descriptions**

**Engagement:** Excellent attendance, punctuality, and active participation in discussions, activities, and group projects. Voluntarily ask questions, engage with ideas of fellow classmates, and offer responses to the readings that show insight and honest interaction with the readings.

**Reading Journal & Notes:** Your reading journal & Notes will prompt you to write regularly and to practice the art of critical, close, and slow reading. You will write your journal by hand. Yay! It will be your space to respond to the course readings and to record your evolving thoughts and feelings about faith in literature. In addition to occasional in-class entries on lecture and class notes, for homework you will write entries in response to the readings outlined on the syllabus. [See the Reading Journal and Notes instructions in the Resource Module for correct format (Cornell/Sketchnote method).] You will want to use the journal to record your class notes on lectures and discussions.

The Journal will be collected once at mid-quad and once at the end of the quad, as noted on the schedule. Bring your journal with you to every class session.

**Reading Quizzes (RQ):** Short-answer Canvas quizzes given at the beginning of class on days listed in the schedule. 10 quizzes total. Laptop required. No makeups. **Option:** Say you are absent or didn't read the assigned texts on a certain day, and you miss an RQ. Here's a solution: in lieu of up to two reading quizzes, you may read, listen to, or watch one of the supplemental materials in the modules, write a one-page literary analysis of the literary devices used in the piece, and discuss why or why not you think it qualifies as "Christian" fine art. (Note: You may also choose to watch any "Christian" film on DVD, Netflix, Hulu, YouTube, or Amazon Prime, and write your analysis of the film). If you have a disability, please let me know so we can arrange an alternate quiz format that will work for you.

**Formal Writing Assignments:**

Type and format papers using MLA style: 12-point Times New Roman, single sided, double-spaced, heading, running header, 1" margins, (where applicable) correctly documented in-text citations and Works Cited entries. See OWL Purdue online for correct format.

- **Close Reading (CR):** At the beginning of the course, sign up to write a reflection and lead class discussion on one of the course readings. Your reflection will contain the following:

1. By hand, copy a passage (or a complete poem) from that day's reading.
  2. Write a 350-700 word response: What dazzled you or made more sense when you slowed down and wrote by hand? What features of literary artistry are important in this text? How does this text connect to faith and current culture? Do a bit of online research of the author's bio. Look up any words or cultural references you don't know. Your response should be mostly your own thoughts and observations, but be sure to cite your source if you do use any information or ideas from elsewhere.
  3. At the end of your response, write three thought-tickling questions you will ask the class during our discussion.
  4. Submit hard copy plus upload Word file to Canvas.
- **Talk Back (TB):** Building our idea that art is a conversation, twice during the quad, you will talk back to one assigned text of your choice. Each talk back will have two distinct parts:
1. **I Say:** Write a short creative piece in response to and in the same genre as one of our assigned texts. You can even write a "sequel" to your chosen text. Apply and incorporate into your piece any literary elements that we've studied that suit the art you are creating. Practice the art and craft of creative writing. Imagine. Render your ideas in images that appeal to the five senses. Have fun. At the end of your response, write a reflective artist's statement that discusses your writing process and choices (approx. 250-300 words).
  2. **They Say:** Write a focused 2-page (approx. 600-700 words) argument about your chosen text in which you analyze one or more literary elements that are key to your understanding of the text. In your first sentence, state the author, the author's impact on our culture, the specific text, and the literary element/s you are focusing on. Assert a fresh claim (thesis) about the specific work and why we should care, and then support your claim with specific evidence (quoted lines and details) from the text. You may use outside sources if you wish, but make sure that all quoted material is seamlessly incorporated into your argument. Use proper introductions, citations, punctuation (quote marks, etc.), signal phrases, and explanations of the significance of the evidence in support of your thesis.

Due dates for each talk back are listed on the syllabus. Upload Word file to Canvas.

Option: For extra credit, you may bring a print copy to class and read it to us (or sing or act out).

Use proper MLA format. Refer to your *St. Martin's* or *Writer's Reference* handbooks (you still have that, don't you?) or to the OWL Purdue online for writing/formatting assistance.

**Final Presentation:** At the beginning of the course, you will choose a final presentation group. Your group will choose one genre and for a portion of your final exam will prepare and present one of the following two options:

- **Research presentation:** For your selected genre, research a writer your group believes should be added to our anthology. In the context of our working definition of what it means to be a contemporary Christian writer, explain why you believe your writer should be included, provide a short bio, analyze and evaluate the writer's unique literary techniques or style, and discuss what important contribution your writer is making to our culture. You may want to try to contact your writer for added insight and coolness. Include some form of visual presentation (e.g. emaze, PowerPoint, Prezi, video, etc.). Be sure to include a slide for your Works Cited. Provide a handout of selected text. Upload your presentation to Canvas. 10-minute presentation. For the individual portion, write a 700-750 word essay in which you explain your specific contribution to the project and write a concise argument on the above. Upload your essay to Canvas.
- **Creative presentation:** For your selected genre, write and present a creative interpretation of the life and work of one of the writers we're studying. Write a 700-750 words essay in which you describe your

particular contribution along with an explanation of why you chose your writer, what about the writing dazzles you, and what important contribution you believe your writer is making to our culture. Upload your typed script and your description as a Word doc. In Canvas. 10 minute presentation.

#### Points

**Final Exam:** “Take-home” Canvas quiz of literary terms and examples from course readings + short essay in which you will draw on relevant course readings and content to articulate your definition and defense of contemporary Christian writers. Open notes and texts. Computer and Internet are required. 2.5 hours

### PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If you miss more than 10% of class meetings (2 class periods), I may file a written report, which may result in your de-enrollment. If you are absent more than 20% (4 class periods), you may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for your work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog. In addition to excellent attendance and punctuality, your *engagement* with the course, your classmates, and me is essential and is worth 10% of your grade. Active engagement means that you will come to class fully prepared to discuss and engage with the readings and the ideas of your peers. I will expect you to contribute voluntarily, frequently, and insightfully to discussions (in class and on Canvas).

In the event of absence for ANY reason, you are responsible for ANY information or class content missed. It is your responsibility to consult Canvas or to contact a classmate for any missed handouts, notes, or content for the session missed. Do not email me with any non-excused requests for missed content or extensions on assignment due dates. A courtesy email to notify me of your absence is appreciated but not required.

### ASSIGNMENTS, INCOMPLETES, AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are 100% required. Unless otherwise posted on Canvas, all assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due. Points possible for late submissions will be reduced 10% for each day past the due date. Incompletes will be assigned only in extremely unusual circumstances. Absence from class does not mean you can turn in an assignment late. Emails requesting extensions will not be answered unless you have a documented emergency. You must still submit your work by the due date even if you are not in class on that day.

### EXTRA CREDIT TO EXTEND THE CONVERSATION

**Brown Bag:** Try your hand at being a *contemporary Christian writer* and get your creative juices flowing at *Brown Bag*, an informal drop-in creative writing session held each Tuesday from 12-1pm at the Ink Spot in Liberty Station (2730 Historic Decatur Rd., Barracks 16, Suite 202, San Diego, CA 92106). \$5.00 (Purchase a punch card at the Ink Spot and save money: Buy 7 sessions and get eighth one free). No registration required. Each time you attend a Tuesday session, come to class and show me what you worked on. 5 points for each session, up to 25 points.

**Literary Events:** Feel free to attend other writing events (lecture, workshop, reading) at PLNU or around town. For up to two events, write a 1-2 page analysis/reflection evaluating the event in light of themes discussed in class. Due within one week of the event. 5 points per event, up to 2 events.

**Facebook Post:** Message one writer about whom you have written a reflection or creative analysis. Write a brief message of introduction, and attach your paper. Take a screenshot and show me for 5 points. Earn another 5 if you can prove an ongoing positive conversation with your writer.



**Talk Back Presentation:** On the days that TB's are due, you may read the creative piece (or an excerpt) you wrote (not to exceed 5 minutes). 5 points each.

## STUDENT ATHLETES

Any student athlete who is going to miss a class due to team obligations must speak with me and present official documentation by the end of Week 2 or as soon as the game schedule is posted. These absences will be excused, but assignments must still be submitted on their scheduled due dates.

## CANVAS

It is your responsibility to check your Canvas account often for announcements, course material, forms, handouts, videos, postings, and messages. This is the primary way outside of class to access course materials, submit assignments, and communicate with each other. **NOTE: While the Canvas grade book should give you a relatively accurate view of your “running total” score in the class, you should not rely on it as a final reflection of your grade. See me if you have questions about this.**

## ELECTRONIC DEVICES

You may bring your laptop or Smartphone to class. You will need it for some but not all in-class activities. BUT, until I give direction for use, all electronic devices must be silenced or turned off before the start of class. If during class you are seen texting, tweeting, checking email or Facebook, listening to music, or conducting any activity not related to the class activity at the moment, I will mark you absent for that day. Unauthorized use of technology is not the place for the classroom. There will be times when you will be allowed to use technology, and these will be announced ahead of time.

## COMPUTER OR PRINTER PROBLEMS

Problems with technology happen. However, you should always back up your files. If your computer crashes and you are unable to produce a copy of your work by the beginning of class, your paper will be late. Do not leave printing your assignments until right before class. If your printer breaks and you are unable to produce a hard copy of your work at the beginning of class, you must still upload it to Canvas. An electronic submission will not take the place of a hard copy. You must produce a hard copy and deliver it to me in class no later than the next session.

## STUDENT CONDUCT

As a valued member of a community of learners, you have an obligation to be responsible and respectful to classmates and the instructor and to ensure that the exercise of your freedom of expression does not impinge on the rights of others in their quest for learning. In addition, you must acknowledge the responsibility of the professor to create and preserve an environment conducive to the learning of all students. The instructor has the responsibility and authority to maintain appropriate student behavior. The instructor is also responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for this course.

## COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

This classroom will be a safe environment that is 100% free of discriminatory acts and bias. Cultural sensitivity will be strongly encouraged as you grow as contributors to the academic conversation and to the conversations in your life beyond the university. We will at all times practice the stated Core Values for PLNU:

- A willingness to hear and learn from many diverse voices is foundational to a Christian liberal arts education and prepares students to become truly educated people, equipped to live in a diverse society and world.



- It is through the inclusion and experience of others from diverse backgrounds and points of view that we often begin to see dimensions of truth previously unseen by us.
- Diversity not only enriches the educational endeavor, it is critical to it.

If you witness or experience an incident that could be considered unfair, biased, or discriminatory, please let me know, or contact PLNU's Chief Diversity Officer.

### PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

You will 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 your own when in reality they are the results of someone else's creativity and effort. If I believe you have failed to correctly cite or have plagiarized another's work—in whole or in part, intentional or not—or if I detect any academic dishonesty, I may give you zero points for that assignment or exam, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. I will follow and you may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

### PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at [DRC@pointloma.edu](mailto:DRC@pointloma.edu). See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

### SUPPORT

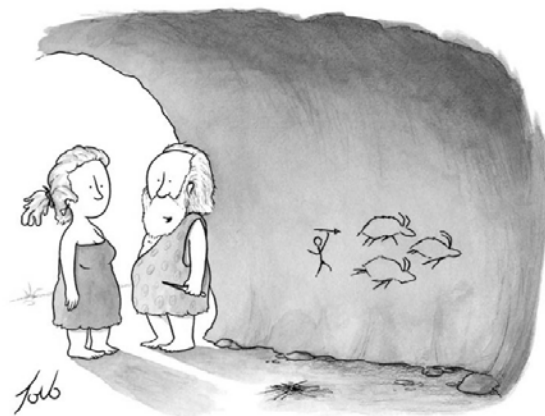
You may count on my expertise and support to help you meet your course goals. However, I cannot support lack of planning or effort. Neither can I think for you. If you need assistance or feedback on any aspect of the course that is not addressed in class, I will be happy to meet with you before or after class to discuss your concerns and needs and to provide guidance and feedback. If you desire a longer session, you may drop in during office hours or schedule an appointment. For additional support, you are strongly encouraged to consult [Tutorial Services](#) or any of [Ryan Library's librarians](#).

### 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. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

### 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.



*"I finished my memoir."*