

WRI 321 – Creative Writing: Poetry & Fiction

Fall, 2017 – Carl Winderl, Ph.D. @ 3:20 - 5:30 M – W & @ 3:00 – 4:30 T / Garden Room & TBA

“We are all storytellers, and our lives are the fictions we have made,” according to John Rouse in The Completed Gesture. And stories come from experience, past and present. Students should be willing to gather experience this semester and then attempt to attach a specific significance to their experiences through their poems and stories. Whether through poetry or fiction, or journals – or any other writing genre – students/writers tell their stories because of what they have lived – seen, experienced, felt, observed, . . . breathed! In particular, students should immerse themselves in a situation – in Life – , then reflect upon their experiences. This process of immersion, reflection, immersion, reflection, etc., can provide students with a mode of inquiry for examining their lived lives. This course, formally and informally, in class and out of class, will encourage students to explore the significance of the stories they are living.

Texts

Boisseau, Michelle, Robert Wallace, & Randall Mann. Writing Poems, 7th Ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2008.

Cassill, R.V. Writing Fiction. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975.

Course Description

This course will focus on the process and the product of the writing experience that produces poetry and short fiction. Each student will be expected to participate in every class session as reader and listener; storytelling has its origin in both the oral and aural experience, and all the techniques available to the storyteller will be examined and practiced. Students will engage the storytelling of the past and present; the storytellers of the past and present; and especially those storytellers in-class and their stories. Furthermore, students will explore the timeless ideas and urges that inspire writers to share their experiences and the essence of their lives with others in the written mode.

Course Objectives

To acquaint the student with poems and short stories by investigating various models from times past and present and places near and far;

To introduce the student to the various and multiple processes for creating poems and short stories;

To provide specific strategies, techniques, and concepts for producing poems and short stories;

To expose the student to the advantages of affirmative feedback and constructive criticism in the workshop and mentor formats.

In addition, this course will enable students to experience the **Institutional Learning Outcomes** as members of the PLNU Community; they will:

display openness to and mastery of foundational knowledge & perspectives;
think critically, analytically, and creatively;
communicate effectively;

demonstrate God-inspired development and understanding of self and others;
live gracefully within complex professional, environmental and social contexts;

engage in actions that reflect Christian discipleship in a context of communal service and collective responsibility;
serve both locally and globally in a vocational and social setting.

Furthermore, this course will also enable students to experience the **Departmental Program Learning Outcomes** as members of the LJML Department; they will:

apply creative and advanced skills in various forms and genres of writing;
demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and terminology of creative and advanced writing within literary and non-literary texts;
demonstrate knowledge of major literary-theoretical perspectives and terminology;
develop connections between the literature and language studied and the contemporary world;
engage writing and editorial processes through campus publications and external internships.

Students who complete WRI321 will be able to:

1. identify (**knowledge, comprehension**) aspects of theory, style, and structure in works of poetry;
2. analyze (**analysis**) poetry written by professionals and peers to determine authors' writing techniques in relationship to target audiences;
3. craft (**application, synthesis**) poems using descriptive and evocative language, imagery, rhyme, meter, form, and other advanced writing conventions;
4. demonstrate (**application**) ability to improve the quality of their own work and the work of others via practices of editing and revision;
5. position and format (**analysis, evaluation**) submissions for publication in a professional manner.

Topical Course Outline

The course material will be presented in the lecture, discussion, and collaborative learning formats while each student will be required to present in class, through an oral reading, a minimum of two poems and one short story. A ten- to fifteen-minute discussion will follow each student's poem or story. Approximately forty-five minutes to one hour of each class will be devoted to this workshop format. The remaining class time will focus on the assigned readings examining the process of creating poetry and fiction and discussing the poems and short stories in the texts that have stood the tests of time and exposure. From the first day, students will be expected to mine their observations and experiences for personal impressions and expressions in their poetry and fiction for how the essence of their lives is being impacted.

Course Requirements

If students wish to master the course material, **CLASS ATTENDANCE** is necessary – imperative for students who wish to pass the course with any kind of respectable grade. Students may rest assured there is an inexplicable correlation between class attendance and grade performance. N. B.: I will take Attendance Daily.

The daily **READING ASSIGNMENTS** should be considered as minimum requirements. Read as widely as possible for this course, from the assigned texts on the syllabus to any other supportive collateral reading the student might discover. Individuals differ in reading ability, and some students might be able to read much more than the minimum requirements. Warning!!! Occasional **POP QUIZZES**, however, will be given at the discretion of the instructor.

In addition to in-class writing assignments and an occasional Pop Quiz, each student will be required to write at least two poems and one short story to present to the class in a workshop format. Length and subject matter will be revealed throughout the course on an ongoing basis.

For in-class writing, students will be expected to translate observations or experiences into a one-page 100-200 word “Reflection.” These short assignments could be character sketches; re-created events, scenes, or conversations; descriptions of people, places, or things; or any re-lived personal trip, journey, or specific travel – “recollected in tranquility.” Any ‘reflection’ could further serve as pre-writing part of a rough draft for a poem or short story. [Along with journals, dairies, or logs, these “reflections” have the potential to be the student’s most personal, insightful, individual, meaningful, lasting, and treasured practice “places” available to visit and re-visit.]

In addition to embracing and adopting the multiple skills, strategies, and techniques for successfully writing poetry and short fiction, as will be discovered and discussed from the major text, additional suggestions for earning a “Good Grade” on poetic and prose efforts are listed below:

Poems and stories must be typed or printed out by a computer. Students should always consider their reader’s eyes and see to it that the type is dark and legible and that the font is simple and accessible.

AVOID PLAGIARISM!!! Students must not copy from any popular or critical source, on-line or otherwise. The instructor reserves the right to challenge or reject any story which he suspects is not the student’s original work. Any plagiarized work – in-class writings, pop quizzes, or poetic or prose pieces – will result in an AUTOMATIC “F” for the Course! (Also, see the institutional policy below*.)

Electronic Devices

Cell phones must be disabled during class (no texting, I-M-ing, etc.), and laptops can only be used for note-taking (in the front row and visible to the instructor, with *wi-fi disabled*). Other inappropriate use will heavily impact the class participation portion of students’ grades.

All students are expected to meet the standards for this course as set by the instructor. However, students with learning disabilities who may need accommodations should discuss options with the Academic Support Center during the first two weeks of class. The ASC will contact professors with suggested classroom needs and accommodations. Approved documentation must be on file in the ASC prior to the start of the semester. These qualified students should also discuss available options and alternatives with the instructor during the first two weeks of the semester and provide approved documentation and verification of need. In addition, the Academic Support Center is available to students for a variety of tutorial and curricular needs.

*LJML Department Policy on Plagiarism: The Department of Literature, Journalism, and Modern Language deems intellectual and academic integrity to be critical to academic success and personal development; therefore, any unethical practice will be detrimental to the student’s academic record and character. Students who present the work of others, which includes but is not limited to borrow-ing another student’s work, buying a paper, or using the thoughts or ideas of others as if their own (using information in a paper without citation), commit plagiarism. Students will be held accountable for plagiarized material whether the material was plagiarized intentionally or unintentionally. Plagiarized work will result in a failing grade for the assignment and possibly for the course. In either event, a written report will be filed with the department chair and area dean. The dean will review the report and submit it to the provost and the vice-president for student development. It will then be placed in the student’s academic file.

Assessments and Measurements

The Final Grade for this course will be determined on the following basis:

A Minimum of two to eight Poems	35 %
A Minimum of two Short Stories	35 %
Pop Quizzes (on any in-textual subject matter)	10 %
In-class Writing Exercises	10 %
Attendance & Attentive Participation	10 %

In addition, the Final Grade can be affected positively or negatively by the following factors:

- + + + + + faithful attendance in class and active participation in discussions and “activities”;
- - - - - excessive absences, inattention in class, general lack of interest and punctuality.

[For THE SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS listed below under the **Course of Study**, all page numbers refer to the main texts, **Writing Poems (WP)** or **Writing Fiction (WF)**. The assigned reading for any given day should be read **prior to** attending class on that given day. Keep in mind also that the syllabus is a contract between the student and the instructor. The student is responsible for keeping this document and for referring to it for daily assignments. Losing the syllabus or failing to consult it is no excuse for being unprepared for class. Finally, the **Course of Study** is subject to change for a variety of reasons, at the instructor’s discretion.]

Course of Study

Monday, August 7th Introduction to the Course

Writing Poems: Chapter 1 – “Starting Out,” pp. 1 - 21

Wednesday, August 9th WP: Chapter 6 – “Subject Matter,” pp. 113 - 35

Monday, August 14th WP: Chapter 7 – “Metaphor,” pp. 136 – 59

Wednesday, August 16th WP: Chapter 8 – “Tale, Teller, and Tone,” pp. 160 - 81

WP: Chapter 9 – “The Mysteries of Language,” pp. 182 - 204

Monday, August 21st WP: Chapter 10 – “Finding the Poem,” pp. 207 - 30

WP: Chapter 11 – “Devising and Revising,” pp. 231 – 55

Wednesday, August 23rd WP: Chapter 2 – “Verse,” pp. 25 - 43

Monday, August 28th WP: Chapter 3 – “Making the Line (I),” pp. 44 – 68

Monday, September 4th WP: Chapter 4 – “Making the Line (II),” pp. 69 – 88

WP: Chapter 5 – “The Sound (and Look) of Sense,” pp. 89 – 110

- Wednesday, September 6th Writing Fiction, “Author to Reader,” pp. xii-xvi
WF, “Reading as a Writer,” pp. xii – xvi
- Wednesday, September 13th WF, “Theme,” pp. 169 - 74
WF, “In The Central Blue,” pp. 53 – 63
WF, “Description, Narrative Passages, Scenes, and Dialogues,” pp. 19 – 33
- Tuesday, October 3rd WF, “Finger Exercises,” pp. 35 - 41
WF, “Notebooks and Lists,” pp. 43 – 49
WF, “Taking Care,” pp. 65 – 76
- Tuesday, October 10th WF, “Choosing a Subject,” pp. 11 – 8
“Pets” by Kelly Notfale
- Tuesday, October 17th WF, “Character,” pp. 153 – 61
WF, “The Lady with the Pet Dog,” pp. 77 – 94
- Tuesday, October 24th WF, “Plot as Unity,” pp. 147 – 51
WF, “Us He Devours,” pp. 95 - 104
- Tuesday, October 31st WF, “Tone,” pp. 163 – 8
WF, “Murphy’s Xmas,” pp. 105 – 21
- Tuesday, November 7th WF, “Unity,” pp. 141 – 6
WF, “The Best of Everything,” pp. 123 – 37
- Monday, November 13th **FINAL EXAMINATION** Noon til 2:00 p.m.

Instructor: **Carl Winderl, Ph.D.** E-mail: cwinderl@pointloma.edu Office: **TBA . . .**
Office Hours: **Monday & Wednesday 1:30 – 2:30 . . . and by appointment**