



## *Creative Writing Fiction: Short Story*

**Dept. of Literature, Journalism & Modern Languages**  
**WRI 322 (3 units)**  
**Fall, Section 1**

<b>Meeting days:</b> T/R	<b>Instructor:</b> Breeann Kirby
<b>Meeting times:</b> 8am-9:15am	<b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:bkirby@pointloma.edu">bkirby@pointloma.edu</a>
<b>Meeting location:</b> BAC 105B	<b>Office location:</b> BAC 119
<b>Final Exam:</b> R 7:30am	<b>Office hours:</b> 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 becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.*

### **WRI322 FAQ**

#### **What am I going to learn in this class?**

WRI322 is an undergraduate creative writing elective you can choose as part of your writing degree. This class is a writing class; thus, you will write often and diversely, learning how to go from brainstorming a nascent idea to a final product. As such, you will spend time both in and outside of class reading and writing. Further, you will spend time workshopping each other's drafts which is teach you not only to respond and give outside critique but also to look at yours and others' works with an eye for grammar, narrative clarity, aesthetics, entertainment, and inspiration. Finally, good writers are good readers; though we have three books that will cover the mechanics of writing and the creative life, we will also read various stories.

The PLNU catalog states that WRI322 is

Comprehensive instruction and guided workshop in writing fiction. Attention is also given to methodology in teaching fiction writing and to finding publication. May be repeated once for major credit with instructor's consent.

The **Writing Program Learning Outcomes** are as follows:

1. Apply creative and advanced skills fiction writing and analysis, demonstrating critical thinking and quantitative reasoning appropriately.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and terminology of creative and advanced writing within literary and non-literary texts.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of major literary-theoretical perspectives and terminology. Develop connections between the literature and language studied and the contemporary world.
4. Engage in writing and editorial processes through campus publications and external internships.
5. Present creative work to formal audiences, demonstrating strategies for audience engagement and oral communication of written work.

During the course of the semester, we will touch on aspects of all five of these outcomes. The specific **Course Outcomes** are as follows:

1. Gain a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity.
2. Develop creative capacities.
3. Develop in expression yourself orally or in writing.
4. Develop specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course.

**Where do I have to spend my money for this class?**

1. Kleon, Austin *Steal Like an Artist* (ISBN-13: 978-0761169253);
2. Le Guin, Ursula K. *Steering the Craft* (ISBN-13: 9780544611610);
3. Shawl, Nisi and Cynthia Ward *Writing the Other* (ISBN-13: 9781933500003);
4. Printouts from Canvas as well as your essays—plan accordingly
  - a. You will make copies of your three short stories for the class to workshop
  - b. Part of your grade will be printing out some short stories on Canvas, annotating them, and contributing to class discussion;
5. Pocket folder (not a three-ring binder) to turn in your work;
6. Various office supplies (lined paper, highlighters, pens, stapler, Scotch tape);
7. (Optional) Another writing craft book from an approved list;
8. (Optional) Notebook/Journal for in-class free writing.

**\*\*In the interest of lightening the financial burden of college education, I have placed our additional readings on Canvas rather than constructing a course reader. It is your responsibility to PRINT these texts out for annotation purposes and bring them to class. 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. However, any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.**

### **Are there any resources I can use online and/or on campus to help me?**

Yes. The following are a few of my favorites.

**The Writers' Studio** is located in Bond Academic, room 159

<http://www.pointloma.edu/experience/academics/schools-departments/department-literature-journalism-modern-languages/writers-studio>.

**The Library** has not only many books but also databases that allow you to do specific searches for any topic you want. Further, it also contains very helpful librarians who can assist you.

**Canvas** will contain this syllabus, the assignments, some readings, and other fun sundries throughout the semester. Sometimes you might have to print them for class. Please check Canvas regularly.

**OneLook** is an online database of dictionaries [www.onelook.com](http://www.onelook.com).

**Wikipedia** is an online encyclopedia [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org). Though this site can have errors from time to time, it is a wonderful place to look up any person, place, or event you encounter in your reading that you do not know.

**Me** I am available to answer any questions you may have. Tell me when you need to see me in class or email me.

### **What do I have to do to pass this class?**

1. Come to class
2. Do all the assignments: **ALL assignments are due in PAPER copy the day of class unless you are specifically directed otherwise.**
3. Turn them in on time

*\*Disclaimer: This class requires a lot of reading and writing. ALL submissions done outside of class must be free of grammatical errors, typed, and double spaced. I will note work that does not meet these standards; you will have the opportunity this semester to revise ONE assignment of your choice to meet B or above standards. I will often communicate with you via email and/or Canvas to tell you about changes or other assignments.*

*\*\* Further Disclaimer: You must avoid typos in your papers. Typos indicate to me that you are being too lazy to proof your text before you turn it in and that you believe your peers enjoy wasting their time with unreadable papers. Typos include but are not limited to spelling errors, misuse or nonuse of capitalization, fragments, or incorrect punctuation. Because no one is a perfect proofreader, I will allow one typo every page (meaning if you have a five page paper, you may have up to five typos total on any of the pages in that work).*

**Read and Annotate Every Story/Book Assigned:** I expect you to not only carefully read and annotate the texts you purchased for this course but also PRINT OUT, carefully read, and annotate the Course Reader I have made available on Canvas.

**Portfolio of Writing:** This will be a collection of what you have written over the semester (you will keep it in the pocket folder you had to buy). Keep Everything unless told not to. The Portfolio will contain:

**Three short stories:** Over the course of the semester, you will write three original short stories of 1200 – 2500 words.

**Revised short story:** This will be a revision of a short story of your choice.

**Copies of your responses to your peers' stories:** These will be 250 – 400 words each. You should have about 15 (three for each classmate) of these by the end of the semester.

**In-Class Writing:** Many class days, I will begin with a short free write. You will do these in a dedicated journal or sheets of paper that you will keep in your portfolio.

**Workshop:** We will do workshops as a whole class throughout the semester. You will be responsible for printing copies of your own stories for everyone in the class (about 7). During workshops, we will thoroughly read, mark up, and discuss your stories. Your workshop grade will be based on your verbal participation and written comments.

**Final Exam:** Attendance is mandatory. For your final, you will give a practiced, polished reading of a story from your Portfolio. You will be graded on the quality of your introduction to and delivery of the story.

**\*Lead Class Discussion:** Some of you may choose to lead the class in discussing one of the fiction stories we will read, connecting to the principles of writing covered in Le Guin's or Shawl/Ward's texts. If you do, you will place these notes in your portfolio.

**\*Three Journals for Publication:** Browse the lists of literary journals on [www.pw.org](http://www.pw.org). Visit some journals' websites, read sample stories, and look at their submission guidelines. Choose three journals that seem to fit your own or a classmate's aesthetic. On presentation day, come to class prepared to give a short talk about each journal you've chosen. Your presentation should include a handout that gives your classmates an overview of each magazine's aesthetic (including preferred writing styles), masthead (relevant editors), past writers of note (if any), submission guidelines, web address, and contact info. This may be a print journal or an online journal.

**\*Present Writing Craft Book:** From a list I've compiled, you will choose, read, and then present to the class another book on the writing craft.

**\*/\*\*Attend a Literary Event:** Writing events go on frequently at PLNU and in our larger San Diego community. Attend an author lecture, reading, or workshop and write a 1-2 page critical analysis and reflection over what was said and how you can apply it to your reading and/or writing of literature. Due within one week of the event.

**\*\*Daily Pages:** For one month (31 days) you will write 750 words daily. These are free writes to clear the "junk" out of your head; you can use it work on ideas, vent, meditate, whatever you want. I will not read them. It is the practice and act of writing that matters. I suggest you try [www.750words.com](http://www.750words.com) as your way to accomplish this assignment (you get one month free). Each week, you will send me a screen shot of the diagnostic page that shows completed days.

**\*\*Journal Submission:** On the final day of class, you will bring one complete literary journal submission that we will mail together (or give me evidence of online submission before our final meeting). I will give you instructions and advice on cover letters/emails and other technical details of submissions later in the semester. For now, concern yourself with writing and revising to make your stories as good as they can be.

**\*\*Present on a Published Writer:** Find a published writer whose style is similar to yours. Read some of his/her work. Present to the class the things the writer does that makes his/her work similar to yours, the sort of craft he/she employs, and ways you can "steal" from their work to better your own writing.

**\*For all of these assignments, further instructions will be given on Canvas and/or in class\***

**Will I be required to attend and participate in class?**

Yes. Because writing is a process, you must engage in that process to get anything out of it; meaning, you must interact with the instructor and the other students *every* class session. You must talk and offer considered feedback in workshops to participate. If you wish to earn your participation grade, you must have a good attitude; you must read all of the readings; and you must speak out. Make it your goal to come up with one good thought for every class and to share it. By doing so, you will be prepared for any reading quizzes I will give. **Also, you must turn off your electronics when you enter the classroom; use of electronics will not be permitted unless you have an academic accommodation.**

Further, sometimes I may SPEAK information in class that is important. It is your responsibility as an active class participant to take notes. I often will use class discussion as a place to clarify how to do a certain writing assignment. This discussion may not appear on Canvas or a PowerPoint presentation. Thus, your taking good notes is important for your success in the class.

Much of the work we will do in this class is cooperative. You should think of all your writing and speaking for and in class as public, not private, discourse. **By continuing in this class, you acknowledge that your work will be viewed by others in the class.**

Respect in class is a must. This classroom is a safe space. As we discuss and analyze works that may address potentially emotional topics, we will encounter many different viewpoints within the class. In order to be a good participant in this class, you must be sensitive to your fellow learners. As we share ideas, personal insults and comments will not be tolerated. I will ask you to leave if you cannot be kind. If you aren't sure how to phrase your opinion, please ask me. The best rule to follow: be kind.

**How will I know what to do and what my grade is?**

Because writing is a process, I want you to be able to engage in your work, taking the tools you learn from each piece you produce into the next without worrying about how many points you might lose on an individual piece of prose. To eliminate grade anxiety, I've set this course up on a contract grading model. This model means that you can choose which grade you would like to earn right now at the beginning of the semester and then allocate your time wisely to earning that grade. Though you will not get an individual score on your papers, I will mark if you do not meet or exceed the requirements for the grade you are working to earn.

I will not accept work that is unfocused and rife with grammatical and logical errors and typos. If you happen to turn in an essay that appears to be the product of lazy engagement with the writing, you risk not meeting the conditions of our grade contract. I will give you an opportunity to revise ONE essay of your choice this semester. I assume that none of you want a grade of D or F; if you are interested in a grade lower than a C, please meet with me to discuss your options.

**700-799 points: C**

To earn a C grade in this class, you will:

1. Read and annotate every essay/book chapter assigned;
2. Contribute to class discussion every class;
3. Participate in the in-class writing exercises, keeping them in a dedicated notebook or loose-leaf in your portfolio folder;
4. Miss no more than 2 classes this semester;
5. Come to class on time;
6. Read your peers' work and write a 250-400 word response for each;
7. Actively participate in workshops, leading three;
8. Write three original short stories (1200-2500 words each);
9. Revise one of the short stories after workshop feedback;
10. Participate in a reading of your revised work (Final Exam);
11. Submit a portfolio that contains all your written work over the semester.

I will not accept work that does not meet with the quality expected of a C. If you do not do C-quality work, then I will not accept it. The fluctuation in the points scale allows that there can be variable effort and quality put in at the C level. Thus you can earn a C- or a C+.

**800-899 points: B**

To earn a B grade in this class, you will do **all of the above C assignments, attend one literary event** in the semester, providing a 500-word response to it, as well as **choose one of the assignments** below.

**B1.** Lead class discussion on one of the short stories that we have read in the class, connecting it to principles in the craft books we are reading as well;

**B2.** Present a list of 3 journals/magazines that would be fitting for you to publish one of your stories in, providing a sheet for the class that lists submission requirements for each publication;

**B3.** Choose one of the craft books below, read it, and present on it in class.

*Bird by Bird* Anne Lamott

*On Writing* Steven King

*The War of Art* Steven Pressfield

*The Writing Life* Annie Dillard

*Walking on Water* Madeleine L'Engle

*How to Write Bestselling Fiction* Dean Koontz

*On Writing Well* William Zinsser

*Writing Down the Bones* Natalie Goldberg

*Telling True Stories* Mark Kramer

*The New New Journalism* Robert Boynton

*The Writer's Journey* Christopher Vogler

I will not accept work that does not meet with the quality expected of a B. If you do not do B-quality work, then I will not accept it. The fluctuation in the points scale allows that there can be variable effort and quality put in at the B level. Thus you can earn a B- or a B+.

### **900-1000 points: A**

To earn an A grade in this class you will **do all of the C assignments, attend one literary event this semester**, providing a 500-word response to it, **two B assignments**, and **one of the A assignments** below:

**A1.** Write 750 words a day for a month (31 days);

**A2.** Actually submit one of your short stories to a journal or a contest;

**A3.** Find a published writer who writes similarly to you. Read some of his/her work.

Present to the class the things this writer does that makes his/her work similar to yours, what sort of craft does he/she employ, and ways you can “steal” from his/her methods to make your writing better.

I will not accept work that does not meet with the quality expected of a A. If you do not do A-quality work, then I will not accept it. The fluctuation in the points scale allows that there can be variable effort and quality put in at the A level. Thus you can earn an A- or an A (sorry there are no A+s).

### **What if I turn in a late assignment?**

If you miss the day an assignment is due, your grade on the assignment will drop to not meeting standards of the contract. If you have more than two late assignments in your portfolio, you will not meet the contract for your desired grade.

### **What if I have to miss a class?**

You must attend class to pass the class. However, I do understand that emergencies do come up. If you do choose to miss class, you are responsible for the material covered and assignments given. **You must get this information from another student (not your instructor).** Lecture information is a privilege for those students who choose to come to class. They may decide to share that information with you if you ask nicely. Also, you must be prepared for the next class you attend. “I didn’t know what to do because I missed last class” is not an acceptable excuse.

As PLNU notes,

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

You may be absent 2 class sessions without question. Wise students will not use up allowable absences early-on for fickle purposes, however. A total of 4 absences may result in failure of the course. Three times of arriving late or exiting class early will equal one absence. You should not depend on doctors' or deans' excuses to bail you out. The built-in allowances are there to cover such needs, so plan carefully and do not use up your allowed absences early in the quad. **Please talk to me and e-mail me about extended illness, emergencies and absence for official university business.** Students in traveling groups that **represent the university** should meet

with me during the first week of classes to review the group's travel schedule and its impact in WRI 322. Students who are absent from 6 class sessions within the first 5 weeks (without legitimate reasons communicated promptly to the professor via e-mail) should expect to be automatically and officially de-enrolled from the course. I warn students via e-mail of impending de-enrollment after 5 absences.

**The one exception to allowable misses is our workshop days. If you are absent the days we workshop, you risk voiding our contracted grade. Please schedule your semester accordingly.**

Distracting and disruptive behavior will be considered an absence.

### **What if I want to use other people's writing in my writing?**

As Solomon wisely noted, "There is nothing new under the sun." And using Kleon's text as a guide, we are going to "steal like an artist." So in fiction writing, there is a seeming contraction in what constitutes plagiarism, especially when we look at books like Cathy Acker's *Empire of the Senseless* which reproduces entire sections of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* or cases of fan fiction that build off another person's world building and characters. Writing is often collaborative, and writers share and borrow from each other all the time (just as I did from other PLNU faculty when I wrote this syllabus). There are ways to do this that are acceptable, but there are also ways to use other people's ideas or words in a way that is considered plagiarism. We will discuss this idea of fair use (an actual legal term) and plagiarism further in class. The rule of thumb here is that if you are not creating something new, then you are stealing. Stealing someone else's work will void our grading contract.

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. As explained in the University Catalog, 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. Violations of academic honesty include cheating, plagiarism, falsification, aiding academic dishonesty, and malicious interference. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for a) that particular assignment or examination, and/or b) the course following the procedure in the university catalog. A student remains responsible for the academic honesty of work submitted in PLNU courses and the consequences of academic dishonesty beyond receipt of the final grade in the class and beyond the awarding of the diploma. Ignorance of these catalog policies will not be considered a valid excuse or defense. Students may not withdraw from a course as a response to a consequence. Students may appeal using the procedure in the university catalog.

See Academic Policies for further information.

If you aren't sure if you are plagiarizing (you sweet, naïve thing), check out the information on the university cheating and plagiarism policy at

<http://catalog.pointloma.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=864>

Or you can visit PLNU's library which also has an excellent tutorial on how to avoid plagiarism.

Finally, you can always talk to me.



**Will you assign extra credit?**

During a given semester, opportunities for extra credit may arise. These assignments are often difficult. These tasks give you *extra* points to boost your contracted grade to a +; therefore, they require *extra* effort.

**How do I contact you?**

At the top of the syllabus, all of my contact information is listed. In the subject line of your email, please indicate WRI 322.

**What if I need some extra help in your class?**

While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations. At Point Loma Nazarene University, students must request that academic accommodations by filing documentation within the first two weeks of class with the [Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](http://www.pointloma.edu/experience/offices/administrative-offices/academic-advising-office/disability-resource-center) (<http://www.pointloma.edu/experience/offices/administrative-offices/academic-advising-office/disability-resource-center>), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center will contact the student's instructors and provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual needs of the student. This policy assists the university in its commitment to full compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990, and ADA Amendments Act of 2008, all of which prohibit discrimination against students with special needs and guarantees all qualified students equal access to the benefits of PLNU programs and activities.

Students have the right to appeal decisions regarding academic accommodations. In order to provide prompt and equitable resolution, the student must submit a written or verbal statement to the Director of Academic Advising who will conduct the appeal process in consultation with the Vice President for Student Development.

You can contact the DRC by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at [DRC@pointloma.edu](mailto:DRC@pointloma.edu).

Also, come see me if you think you may need some extra assistance in passing this class.

A	93-100 Percent
A-	90-92
B+	89-88
B	87-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-78
C	77-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-68
D	67-63
D-	62-60
F	Below 60

***This syllabus is a contract. If you continue in this course, then you agree to comply with the class policies as stated here.***

### Schedule

(\*Subject to Change as needed to facilitate course goals\*):

Readings and assignments are due on the date listed.

*StC* denotes readings from *Steering the Craft*.

*WtO* denotes readings from *Writing the Other*

*SLA* denotes readings from *Steal Like an Artist*

(Canvas) denotes readings can be found on Canvas in PAGES section

\*\*\*\*I reserve the right to change the syllabus as needed to facilitate our course goals. You will receive notification of these changes; after which time, you are responsible for required material.\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\* Disclaimer: This class is taught at the college level; therefore, reading materials may be adult and/or controversial in connotation and/or denotation. The purpose of presenting such material is to expose you to various viewpoints—viewpoints that will act as sources for discussions. For this reason, no alternate materials will be provided.\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*Final Disclaimer: You will write A LOT. Writing is a muscle that must be exercised.\*\*\*\*

#### Week 1

**31 August** Syllabus/Getting to Know You

#### Week 2

**5 September** Kleon *Steal Like an Artist* (all of it)

Charters “The Elements of Fiction” (Canvas)

**7 September** *StC* “Appendix: The Peer Group Workshop”: 127 – 135.  
Short Story Handout

#### Week 3

**12 September** *StC* “The Sound of Your Writing/Punctuation and Grammar”: 1 – 19.

Paz “My Life with the Wave” (Canvas)

Chopin “The Story of an Hour” (Canvas)

**14 September** *StC* “Sentence Length and Complex Syntax”: 20 – 35.  
Murakami “Landscape with Flat Iron” (Canvas)

#### Week 4

**19 September** *StC* “Repetition”: 36 – 42.

O’Brien “The Things They Carried” (excerpt; Canvas)

**21 September** *StC* “Adjectives and Adverbs”: 43 – 46.

Joyce “A Mother” (Canvas)

**DUE:** Short Story 1 (make copies for everyone in class)

#### Week 5

**26 September** Workshop

**28 September** Workshop

**Week 6**

**3 October** *StC* “Verbs: Person and Tense”: 47 – 60.  
Morrison “Recitatif” (Canvas)

**5 October** *WtO*: 1 – 20.

**Week 7**

**10 October** *WtO*: 21 – 40.

Yu “The Man Who Became Himself” (Canvas)

**12 October** *StC* “Point of View and Voice”: 61 – 86.

**Week 8**

**17 October** *WtO*: 41 – 46.

*StC* “Changing Point of View”: 87 – 93.

Bisson “They’re Made Out of Meat” (Canvas)

**19 October** Hemingway “The Undefeated” (Canvas)

**DUE:** Short Story 2 (make copies for everyone in class)

**Week 9**

**24 October** **Workshop**

**26 October** **Workshop**

**Week 10**

**31 October** *WtO*: 47 – 66.

*StC* “Indirect Narration, or What Tells”: 94 – 116.

**2 November** *WtO*: 85 – 97.

Carver “What We Talk About When We Talk About Love” (Canvas)

**Week 11**

**7 November** *StC* “Crowding and Leaping”: 117 – 126.

Gilman “The Yellow Wallpaper” (Canvas)

**9 November** Le Guin “Schrodinger’s Cat” (Canvas)

Atwood “Happy Endings” (Canvas)

**DUE:** Short Story 3 (make copies for everyone in class)

**Week 12**

**14 November** **Workshop**

**16 November** **Workshop**

**Week 13**

**21 November** **TBD – Work On Revision For Portfolio and Submission**

**23 November** **NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)**

**Week 14**

**28 November** **PRACTICAL SKILLS FOR WRITING**

**30 November** **CRAFT WRITING/AUTHOR presentations**

**Week 15**

**5 December** SUBMISSIONS presentations

**7 December** TBD

**Week 16** FINALS WEEK

**14 December** Final Exam – Reading and Celebration of Work (7:30 – 10am)

**DUE:** Portfolio of Work