

Point Loma Nazarene University  
 Department of Literature, Journalism, Writing, and Languages  
**Creative Writing: Creative Nonfiction**  
**WRI 323 (3 units)**

**Section: 01**

**Time: TR, 8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.**

**Spring 2018**

**Location: Bond 151**

Instructor: Dr. Katie Manning, kmanning@pointloma.edu

Phone: 619-849-2200, x2432

Office: Bond 124

Office Hours: TR, 9:30-10:30 a.m., and other times by appointment

Course Website: <https://canvas.pointloma.edu>

**\*Please turn off your cell phone, laptop, and other devices when you enter the classroom. Thanks!\***

**PLNU Mission Statement: 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.

**LJWL Department Mission Statement:** Welcome to the Department of Literature, Journalism, Writing, and Languages. Embodying the core values of a Christian liberal arts education in the Wesleyan theological tradition, and focusing on the power of language and story to shape us and our world, the LJWL Department and programs will provide students with knowledge, skills, and experiences to equip them to understand, interpret, analyze, evaluate, and create texts as linguistic and/or artistic expressions of diverse human experiences. We value reading, writing, researching, speaking, and discussing as profound means of participating in the redemptive work of God in all of creation. The following document will provide you with the information sources and information guidelines to University and Departmental policies that apply to all courses taken in this Department.

**Catalog Entry:** Comprehensive instruction and guided workshop in creative nonfiction writing, including personal essays and memoirs. Attention is also given to methodology in teaching non-fiction writing and to finding publication. May be repeated once for *major* credit with instructor's consent. Prerequisite: College Composition.

**Course Description:** Anyone can write. Writing is not an innate gift; it is a skill to be learned and practiced. Athletes train, painters paint, and writers write to get better at their craft. In this course, you will develop the skills that are needed to both read and write creative nonfiction well. For the first part of the semester, we will experiment. You will read and write essays with a variety of styles and purposes, and you will make good use of in-class exercises and your personal journal. Later in the semester, you will propose a CNF project of some sort that you'll pursue for the rest of the semester. We will spend a good deal of class time discussing each other's writing in workshops. You will also learn about literary journals that publish creative nonfiction and submit your own work for publication at the end of the semester. This class will

cause you to question your assumptions about nonfiction, and it will prepare you to write and publish compelling nonfiction on your own in the future.

### Required Materials

Tippett, Krista. *Becoming Wise*. Penguin Press, 2016. ISBN: 9781101980316.

(All other readings and resources will be available in class and/or posted on Canvas.)

A writing notebook/journal of your choice

The obvious things: pen/pencil, loose-leaf paper, folder for storage, etc.

### Course Learning Outcomes

| By the end of this course, you should be able to...  | Related IDEA Outcomes   | Assignments  |
|--|---|--|
| Identify current writers, styles, and debates in creative nonfiction.  | Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity  | Readings, Reading quizzes, Journal presentation, Manifesto                     |
| Write creative nonfiction in a variety of styles, complete a self-assigned project, and publicly present and publish your writing. | Developing creative capacities; Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing; Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course | Exercises, Essays, Workshops, Journal presentation, Final exam, Final chapbook |
| Use important literary terms to speak and write about nonfiction.  | Gaining factual knowledge; Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity   | Reading quizzes, Class discussions, Workshops, Manifesto, Final chapbook       |

**Diversity Statement:** Point Loma Nazarene University is committed to diversity in the classroom, in its publications and in its various organizations and components. Faculty and staff recognize that the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of their colleagues and students are best served through respect toward gender, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture and other personal characteristics. In addition, the Department of Literature, Journalism and Modern Languages is committed to taking a leadership position that calls for promoting a commitment to diversity in and out of the classroom and in the practices of writing, journalism, and the study of literature and languages.

**FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) Policy:** In compliance with federal law, neither PLNU student ID nor social security number should be used in publicly posted grades or returned sets of assignments without student written permission. This class will meet the federal requirements by distributing all grades and papers individually. Also in compliance with FERPA, you will be the only person given information about your progress in this class unless you have designated others to receive it in the “Information Release” section of the student portal. See [Policy Statements](#) in the undergraduate student catalog.

**PLNU Academic Accommodations:** 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.

**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. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

For our class's purposes, writing is collaborative, and creative writers share and borrow from each other all the time. There are ways to do this that are acceptable (such as taking suggestions from a workshop group), but there are also ways to use other people's ideas or words in a way that is considered plagiarism (such as passing off somebody else's work as your own). We will discuss this further in class.

**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 Attendance and Participation Policy:** 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.

### CLASS POLICIES

**Grade Distribution:** In order to receive credit for the course, all of the following must be completed. **Failure to complete any major assignment will result in failure of the course.**

|                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Reading Quizzes & Exercise         | 10% - 50 pts         |
| Essays (initial drafts)            | 32% - 160 pts        |
| Manifesto                          | 10% - 50 pts         |
| Workshops                          | 20% - 100 pts        |
| Journal Presentation & Submissions | 4% - 20 pts          |
| Final Exam (reading)               | 4% - 20 pts          |
| <u>Final Chapbook</u>              | <u>20% - 100 pts</u> |
| <i>Total (approximate)</i>         | 100% - 500 pts       |

### Grading Scale & Definitions:

A: 93-100%  
A-: 90-92  
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: below 60

A = Phenomenal work that far exceeds the minimum requirements of the assignment; excellent logic, structure, and organization; virtually no grammar and punctuation errors.

B = Excellent work that exceeds the minimum requirements of the assignment; no major problems with logic, structure, and organization; very few grammar and punctuation errors.

C = Average work that meets the minimum requirements of the assignment; may have minor problems with logic, structure, and organization; may have some grammar and punctuation errors.

D = Poor work that does not fully meet the minimum requirements of the assignment; may have some problems with logic, structure, and organization; grammar and punctuation errors may hinder meaning.

F = Poor work that does not fulfill the assignment; may have serious problems with logic, structure, and organization; grammar and punctuation errors may obscure meaning.

Attendance & Participation: Because discussion will be an important part of our class, your regular attendance and participation are required for you to be successful. Your first two absences will not count against your grade, but use them wisely. For each additional absence, your total grade will be lowered by 3%; **if you miss class more than 4 times (over 2 weeks), you will automatically fail this course.** Coming to class unprepared, staring at a screen, or being disruptive in class will also count as an absence. If you already know that you'll be missing many classes due to some pre-existing schedule conflict, you should not take this course at this time. Also, since arriving late to class is distracting to your classmates (and to me), you are expected to arrive on time. Two late arrivals will count as one absence. Truly perfect attendance (with no tardies or absences of any kind—you were literally present for all of every class meeting) will earn you 1% of extra credit at the end of the semester.

Readings: Readings are due on the date they're listed in the course outline. Always bring your copy of the assigned reading to class with you for use in discussion. Read actively and make notes directly on the text and/or on the side.

Reading Quizzes: On days when reading assignments are due, I may give brief quizzes at the very beginning of class. They will often require short answers to a few questions, but they might

occasionally require a longer answer to one question (in the form of a short essay). This will motivate you to do the assigned reading, and it is extra incentive to get to class on time. These quizzes cannot be made up later. You should keep all quizzes in a notebook or a folder, along with all of your class notes and other assignments. **Save everything** throughout the semester so that you can look back on previous work and build upon it. This will also allow you to keep track of your grade in the class and to ensure that my final calculations are accurate.

Student-Led Exercises: You will be responsible for leading the class in one writing exercise. You should come prepared with some sort of prompt: a model essay, a new form to try, an image, a current event, an object, a song... bring something that gives you the urge to write and might offer possibilities to the other writers in our course. (Example: Don't just tell us to think about crayons. Bring crayons for us to sniff and feel and see.) You'll introduce the exercise, and we'll write for 5-10 minutes. You'll be graded on preparedness and quality.

Essays: You will turn in several early drafts of essays. Some of these will have assigned styles or content. Please bring a hard copy of your essay to class on the day it is due. If it is your day to have an essay workshopped, please also bring enough copies for everyone else in the class (8 currently). These early drafts need not be masterpieces, but they should not be sloppy. It should be clear that you worked on them extensively.

Final Chapbook: At your scheduled conference time, you will submit a project proposal, in which you will describe some sort of research, experience, history, memory, location, style, or other element that will guide your writing for the rest of the semester. You will draft and revise at least 10-20 pages for this self-assigned project; these might be stand-alone micro essays or sections that come together to form one long nonfiction piece. At the end of the semester, you will turn in a final chapbook that includes a title, a brief (1-2 paragraph) introduction to your work, your project, and a brief statement (footnote or endnote) for *each* piece/section on why/how you began, revised, and settled it.

Workshops: We will do workshops as a whole class and in small groups throughout the semester. You will be responsible for printing copies of your own essays for everyone in the class (8 currently). During workshops, we will thoroughly read, mark up, and discuss your essays. Your workshop grade will be based on your verbal participation and written comments.

Manifesto: Writers are always theorizing about writing. For this creative essay, you will attempt to answer a large question about creative nonfiction (what should CNF be or do? is it more like fiction or poetry? how faithful must dialogue and details be? what is most important to avoid in CNF? why do you write CNF?). We will read sample manifestos and discuss their importance in the literary world. You'll receive more detailed guidelines for this later in the semester.

Literary Journal Presentation: Browse the lists of literary journals on [www.pw.org](http://www.pw.org). Visit some journals' websites, read sample essays, and look at their submission guidelines. Choose two journals that publish creative nonfiction and that seem to fit your own or a classmate's aesthetic. On presentation day, come to class prepared to give a one-minute 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), submission guidelines, web address, contact info, and anything else you think is useful.

Journal Submissions: On the final day of class, you will bring two complete literary journal submissions 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 work as strong as it can be.

Paper Format: Early drafts of essays must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times or Arial font, with one-inch margins, and in MLA format. Essays should also include a word count in the header. Electronic submissions will not be accepted, except when approved by me or as required by the assignment. Final drafts of essays should usually be double-spaced or spaced according to the design of the author.

Final Exam: Attendance is mandatory. For your final, you will give a practiced, polished introduction to your chapbook and a reading of your creative work, 10 minutes total. You will be graded on the quality of your introduction and overall delivery.

Due Dates: Dates when assignments are due are listed on the attached course outline; all written assignments are due at the beginning of class. I highly encourage you to visit with me one-on-one during office hours to run project ideas, manifesto drafts, or any questions by me. Once an assignment receives a grade, there will be no further opportunities to revise for a new grade.

**Late work is not acceptable.** If unusual circumstances will keep you from completing an assignment on time, please make arrangements with me for an extension BEFORE the due date (or if you wake up sick, please email me ASAP with your assignment so it will not be counted late). Please complete all readings on time as well. All coursework must be completed by our final meeting.

Student-Directed Conferences: During the semester, you must meet with me on scheduled conference days to discuss your writing, reading, or whatever else you'd like. Dates for these mandatory conferences are on the course outline. This will be part of your attendance grade. Feel free to meet with me more often than this!

Extra Credit (in addition to perfect attendance): 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. Due within one week of the event. This will earn you up to 5 points (up to 2 times).

Canvas: A copy of this syllabus and assignments for our course are online at <https://canvas.pointloma.edu>. You can access these course materials through the portal using your PLNU username and password.

PLNU Email: Your PLNU email account should be checked daily. This is the way that I will most frequently communicate with you outside of class, and it's also the way the university distributes important information.

Inclusive Language Statement: Because language is powerful and shapes the way we think, all public language used in this course, including written and spoken discourse, will be inclusive. This standard is outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and is the norm in university-level work. See the section on "Appropriate Language" at *The Purdue OWL*: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/608/01/>.

Public Discourse: 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.

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

### COURSE OUTLINE<sup>1</sup>

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| R Jan 11 | Introductions and syllabus  |
| T Jan 16 | Read: Gutkind<br>Full syllabus (on Canvas)<br>Due: Bring a blank journal!<br>In Class: Problems with "Essay"<br>Writing laboratory<br>Sign up for exercises |
| R Jan 18 | Read: Sedaris<br>Due: Lab Essay<br>In Class: Dialogue debate<br>Exercise 1  |
| T Jan 23 | Read: Gaudry<br>DUE: Narrative Essay after Sedaris<br>In Class: Narrative vs. lyrical debate<br>Exercise 2  |
| R Jan 25 | Read: Huey<br>DUE: Polyvocal Collage Essay after Gaudry<br>In Class: Memory debate<br>Exercise 3  |

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<sup>1</sup> This schedule may be changed at the instructor's discretion.

- T Jan 30            Read: Forche  
 DUE: List Essay after Huey  
 In Class: Language debate  
           Exercise 4
- R Feb 1            Read: Nelson  
 DUE: Micro Essay after Forche  
 In Class: Appropriation debate  
           Project proposal assigned  
           Exercise 5
- T Feb 6            Read: Evans  
 DUE: "Travel" Essay after Nelson  
 In Class: Imitation Calamari  
           Conference sign-up  
           Exercise 6
- R Feb 8            CONFERENCES  
 DUE: Project proposal w/CNF 1, Journal sign-up, Workshop sign-up
- T Feb 13           CONFERENCES  
 DUE: Project proposal w/CNF 1, Journal sign-up, Workshop sign-up
- R Feb 15           Read: Tippett  
 DUE: Pick 3-4 literary journal options, work on proposal & CNF 1  
 Exercise 7
- T Feb 20           In Class: Workshop A (Group A: bring copies for everyone)
- \**Bonus events*: Writers' Symposium by the Sea – all week!  
 Krista Tippett has afternoon and evening events on Feb. 21.  
 Full schedule: <http://www.pointloma.edu/experience/academics/schools-departments/departments-literature-journalism-modern-languages/events/writers-symposium>
- R Feb 22           DUE: CNF 2  
 In Class: Workshop B (Group B: bring copies for everyone)
- T Feb 27           DUE: CNF 3  
 In Class: Workshop C (Group C: bring copies for everyone)



- R Mar 1                    DUE: CNF 4  
In Class: Workshop D (Group D: bring copies for everyone)
- M Mar 5 – F Mar 9    SPRING BREAK! ☺
- T Mar 13                DUE: CNF 5  
In Class: Pod Workshop (everyone bring copies!)
- R Mar 15                DUE: Bring one clean copy of 4 pieces for workshop  
In Class: Lightning Round Workshop  
Midterm Feedback
- T Mar 20                Read: Manifestos (on Canvas)  
In Class: Manifesto assigned
- R Mar 22                CONFERENCES (required for grades below B, optional for others)
- \*Mar 23: Last day to drop
- T Mar 27                DUE: CNF 6  
In Class: Workshop A (Group A: bring copies for everyone)
- R Mar 29 – M Apr 2    EASTER BREAK! ☺
- T Apr 3                 DUE: CNF 7  
In Class: Workshop B (Group B: bring copies for everyone)
- R Apr 5                 DUE: CNF 8  
In Class: Workshop C (Group C: bring copies for everyone)
- \*F Apr 6                *Bonus event: After-Hours Poetry Party*  
Ryan Library, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, 5 p.m.  
(Bring a poem to read! We will not let the poetry shelves stay silent during  
National Poetry Month...)
- T Apr 10                DUE: CNF 9  
In Class: Workshop D (Group D: bring copies for everyone)
- R Apr 12                DUE: CNF 10  
In Class: Pod Workshop (everyone bring copies!)

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| T Apr 17 | In Class: How to Submit for Publication                                    |
| R Apr 19 | DUE: Literary Journal Handouts<br>In Class: Literary Journal Presentations |
| T Apr 24 | In Class: Lightning Round Workshop (bring clean copies of 4 pieces)        |
| R Apr 26 | DUE: Manifesto<br>In Class: Share Manifestos<br>How to Give a Reading      |

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**FINAL EXAM**  
Thursday, May 3  
7:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

**Final reading & celebration**  
**Final chapbooks due**  
**Submissions due**  
*Mandatory attendance<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> 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.