

Point Loma Nazarene University
 Department of Literature, Journalism & Modern Languages
Creative Writing: Fiction
Special Topic: Flash Fiction
WRI 322 (3 units)

Section: 01

Time: TR, 8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

Fall 2015

Location: Bond 105B

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

Phone: 619-849-2200, x2432

Office: Bond 124

Office Hours: MW, 8:00-9:30 a.m., and other times by appointment

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

Emergency Phone:

Please turn your cell phone off when you enter the classroom. Also, any use of technology in class is limited to relevant writing and note taking. 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.

LJML Department Mission Statement: Welcome to the Department of Literature, Journalism and Modern 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 LJML 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 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. 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 fiction well. We will focus on flash fiction, the shortest of story forms, to closely examine the components of fiction. You will read sample stories, and you will draft and revise several flash pieces with the help of writing exercises, your personal journal, and our in-class workshops. Later in the semester, we

will especially focus on creating a cohesive collection of flash fiction, using Robert Olen Butler's *Severance* as a model. You will also learn about literary journals that publish flash fiction and submit your own work for publication at the end of the semester. This class will cause you to question your assumptions about fiction, and it will prepare you to write and publish compelling fiction of any length on your own in the future.

Required Materials

Masih, Tara L., ed. *Field Guide to Writing Flash Fiction*. Brookline: Rose Metal Press, 2009. Print.

Additional 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 representative short fiction writers in the English language tradition.	Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity	Readings, Reading quizzes, Journal presentation
Write fiction in a variety of styles, create coherent story collections, and publicly present and publish your fiction.	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, Stories, Workshops, Journal presentation, Final exam, Final chapbook
Use important literary terms to speak and write about flash fiction.	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.

Academic Accommodations ([Academic Accommodations](#)): While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of their courses as established by the instructors, students with special needs may require academic accommodations. At Point Loma Nazarene University, students requesting academic accommodations must file documentation with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center contacts the student’s instructors and provides 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.

Academic Honesty ([Academic Honesty](#)): The Point Loma Nazarene University community holds the highest standards of honesty and integrity in all aspects of university life. Any violation of the university’s commitment is a serious affront to the very nature of Point Loma’s mission and purpose. Violations of academic honesty include cheating, plagiarism, falsification, aiding academic dishonesty, and malicious interference. 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.

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.

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	10% - 50 pts
Stories (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 (10 stories)</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 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 5 points 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.

Stories: You will turn in several early drafts of flash stories. Some of these will have assigned styles or content. Please bring a hard copy of your story to class on the day it is due. If it is your day to have a story workshopped, please also bring enough copies for everyone else in the class (23 max). 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 in October, you will submit a collection proposal, in which you will describe some sort of research, theme, or other unifying element that will guide your writing for the rest of the semester. You will draft and revise at least 10 flash stories for this collection. At the end of the semester, you will turn in a final chapbook that includes a collection title, a brief (1-2 paragraph) introduction to your work, at least 10 well-revised stories, and a brief statement for each story on how you began, revised, and settled it.

Workshops: 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 (23 max). 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.

Manifesto: Writers are always theorizing about writing. For this creative essay, you will attempt to answer a large question about flash fiction (what should flash fiction be or do? what is the most important part of writing flash fiction? what is most important to avoid in flash fiction?)

why do you write flash fiction?). We will read sample essays 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. Visit some journals' websites, read sample stories, and look at their submission guidelines. Choose two journals that seem to fit your own or a classmate's aesthetic. On Dec 3, 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), past writers of note, submission guidelines, web address, and contact info. This may be a print journal or an online journal. Please post your handout(s) to Canvas before class time on this day as well.

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 poems as good as they can be.

Paper Format: Early drafts of stories must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times or Arial font, with one-inch margins, and in MLA format. Stories 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 stories should usually be single-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 a couple of the stories from your collection. You will be graded on the quality of your introduction to and delivery of the stories.

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 collection 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 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 of literature. Due within one week of the event. This will earn you up to 5 extra 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 OUTLINE¹

R Sept 3	Introductions and syllabus
T Sept 8	Read: Full syllabus (on Canvas) Due: Bring a blank journal! In Class: Writing laboratory
R Sept 10	Read: "In Pursuit of the Short Short Story: An Introduction" (XI-XIV) Due: Lab Flash In Class: "You and the Piano Bench" & "Without a Second Thought" (1-6), Exercise, Elements of Fiction
*Sept 11: Last day to add	
T Sept 15	"A History of the Short Short Story" (XIV-XX) "The Necklace" by Maupassant (on Canvas) "The Story of an Hour" by Chopin (on Canvas) DUE: Dialogue Flash

¹ This schedule may be changed at the instructor's discretion.

- In Class: “That ‘V’ Word” & “The Sock” (7-14), Exercise
- R Sept 17 “Asia’s Impact on the Short Short Story” (XX-XXII)
 “Old Wine in New Bottles” (15-20)
 DUE: Image Flash
 In Class: “Blowfish” (21-23), Exercise
- T Sept 22 “The 1920s and the Rise of the American Short Story” & “The Short
 Short’s Dormancy” (XXII-XXXIV)
 DUE: Irony Flash
 In Class: “The Myth-ing Link” & “The Sphinx” (24-30), Exercise
- R Sept 24 “The Short Short Reemerges...” & “The Short Short Today” (XXXIV-
 XXXVIII)
 DUE: Myth Flash
 In Class: “Flash Fiction from Embryo to (Very Short) Adult” &
 “Utilitarianism” (31-35), Exercise
- T Sept 29 “A Short Short Theory” & excerpt from *Intercourse* (102-104), Exercise
 In Class: Selections from *Severance*, Collection proposal assigned,
 Conference sign-up
- R Oct 1 “Cheers...” & “Wedding Picture” (36-40)
 DUE: Pick 3-4 literary journal options
 In Class: Journal sign-up, Workshop sign-up, Exercise (bring a photo)
- T Oct 6 CONFERENCES
 DUE: Collection proposal & Story 1
- R Oct 8 CONFERENCES
 DUE: Collection proposal & Story 1
- T Oct 13 “Fireworks and Burnt Toast” & “Dancing with Cobweb,” Exercise
 In Class: Workshop A (Group A: bring copies for everyone)
- R Oct 15 POETRY DAY!
 *No regular class meeting. Attend afternoon & evening events!
- T Oct 20 “Smart Surprise in Flash Fiction” & “Mine” (65-67), Exercise
 DUE: Story 2
 In Class: Workshop B (Group B: bring copies for everyone)

- R Oct 22 “Making Flash Count” & “I Am Holding Your Hand” (68-75), Exercise
DUE: Story 3
In Class: Workshop C (Group C: bring copies for everyone)
- T Oct 27 “Flash... and Men Jumping Out of Windows” & “Naaa” (109-115),
Exercise
DUE: Story 4
In Class: Workshop D (Group D: bring copies for everyone)
- R Oct 29 “Hanging Fire” & “Afterthought, Aftermath, Aftershock” (95-101),
Exercise
DUE: Story 5
In Class: Workshop E (Group E: bring copies for everyone)
- T Nov 3 “Getting the Lead Out” & “Stop” (105-108), Exercise
DUE: Story 6
In Class: Workshop F (Group F: bring copies for everyone)
Midterm Eval
- R Nov 5 CONFERENCES (Optional)
- *Nov 6: Last day to drop
- T Nov 10 “A Flash Before the Bang” & “On Writing Flash Fiction” (150-157)
Futurist Manifesto & Feminist Manifesto (on Canvas)
In Class: Manifesto assigned
Lightning Round Workshop (bring a clean copy of 4 stories)
- R Nov 12 “Forty Stories in the Desert” & “Rorschach” (76-86)
DUE: Story 7
In Class: Rorschach Exercise
- T Nov 17 “Put Yourself in Danger” & “Marriage and the Family” (116-120)
DUE: Story 8
Everyone bring 5 copies of 2 poems for workshop
In Class: Collaborative Writing Exercise
Assign & explain pod workshops
- R Nov 19 “Flash in a Pan” & “Oklahoma Men” (121-124), Exercise
DUE: Story 9
In Class: Pod Workshops

- T Nov 24 “Expose Yourself to Flash” & “Exercise” (125-128), Exercise
DUE: Story 10
In Class: Pod Workshops
- R Nov 26 THANKSGIVING RECESS
- T Dec 1 “Plaster Dust and Sleeping Jockeys” & “A Car” (129-132), Exercise
In Class: How to Submit for Publication
- R Dec 3 “Editing and Revising Flash Fiction” & “In the Air a Shining Heart” (133-
141)
In Class: Literary Journal Presentations
- T Dec 8 “Writing Fixed-Form Narratives” & “The House of Women” (142-149),
Exercise
In Class: Lightning Round Workshop (bring a clean copy of 4 stories)
- R Dec 10 DUE: Manifesto
In Class: Share manifestos

FINAL EXAM
Thursday, Dec 17
7:30-10:00 a.m.

Final reading & celebration
Final chapbooks due
Submissions due
Mandatory attendance
