

WRI 2020 – Intro to Creative Writing

Fall Semester 2020

Course Policies

Section 1 (TR 9:30AM-10:45AM, BAC 151)
3 Units / LJWL Department

Professor: *Robbie Maakestad*
Office: *Bond Academic Center, 119*
Office Hours: *[By appointment:
MWF 8-9AM and TTH 11-12PM]*

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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.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course serves as a general introduction and overview of creative writing.

In order to create an introduction to the craft, terminology, and techniques of creative writing, we will pursue these learning goals:

1. Further our knowledge of both the craft and art of creative writing.
2. Gain an understanding of and learn to apply general writing craft elements such as point of view, voice, story arc, dialogue, description, and scene/summary.
3. Grow in our knowledge of genre: creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry.
4. Endeavor to explain how written work affects both readers and writers. By studying literature as a writer – considering it as a craft as well as an art – we will come to a better understanding of what goes into creation of that literature.
5. Work together in small-group workshops, and individually after those workshops, in order to explore and practice the discipline of revision.

Together, these learning goals allow us to see writing as a process of art, craft, and discipline, which will benefit not just our ability to write creatively in this course, but also our ability to meet the creative and critical demands required of us in the future.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Each of you will be responsible for preliminary drafts of writing assignments, written critiques of classmates' work, various reading and writing exercises that will aid our understanding of the discipline and craft of creative writing, and four finished writing projects (along with four critical analyses): a submission in each of the three genres (fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry) and one final revision project (your choice). Class time will be divided accordingly: lecture and discussion, small group discussion, in-class writing, and small group and whole-class workshops.

Major assignments:

- Fiction Project – 150 points; 50 points Critical Analysis (Grade to be kept only if your final project is NOT fiction)
- Creative Nonfiction Project – 150 points; 50 points Critical Analysis (Grade to be kept only if your final project is NOT creative nonfiction)
- Poetry Project – 150 points; 50 points Critical Analysis (Grade to be kept only if your final project is NOT poetry)
- Lit. Journal Presentation – 50 points
- Craft Moves & Class Zoom Discussions – 200 points
- General Participation – 45 points
- Workshops and Critique Letters – 105 points (Workshops and Critique Letters = 15 points/day)
- Final Expansion Project – 150 points; 50 points Critical Analysis (plus another 150 points as this grade replaces one provisional grade as noted above)

TOTAL = 1000 points

REQUIRED TEXTS

Burroway, Janet. *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft*. 4th ed. Boston: Longman, 2014. ISBN: 9780134053240.

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

RESPECT

Respect for other students and your instructor in our classroom is essential to a healthy classroom dynamic. We may discuss ideas and concepts that challenge your current thinking, so we all must respect one another and be open to new ideas. Show courtesy to other students and your instructor.

CANVAS

Throughout this course, students will be required to utilize Canvas to receive course grades and access any changes to the *Course Schedule* throughout the semester. If the *Course Schedule* is updated, students will be notified well in advance, but will need to download the updated schedule which the instructor will post on Canvas.

PLNU EMAIL

Students must regularly check their PLNU email account for updates on assignments and scheduling.

TECHNOLOGY

You will be expected to refrain from using cell phones or other communication devices in the classroom. Use of iPads and laptops should be limited to times when I ask you to pull out your computers for in class use and in-class writing. Even if it seems that it isn't "bothering anyone," checking your e-mail, your Facebook, or surfing the web during class is rude to your instructor and fellow classmates and will count against your participation grade. I expect you to be an engaged member of the class.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Attendance is expected and is worth 200 points. If you miss a class, it is possible to make up that class period within the week: to do so you must contact the professor and request that the recorded Zoom class discussion be uploaded to YouTube so that you can watch it and participate on the corresponding class discussion board by watching the recording of the class, thoughtfully and extensively posting to the discussion board for that class period concerning content discussed in the class period, and posting your craft moves with a thorough explanation and analysis of each to the discussion board, in addition to obtaining assignments or any updated schedule/assignment information from a classmate in order to be prepared for the next meeting. **I require attendance for workshops and presentation days. Absences on such days will hurt your workshop participation grade.** Missed in-class work may not be made up. In order to learn most affectively and get as much as you can out of this course, in addition to your participation grade, I'd recommend regular attendance. Let me know if you do have to miss a class, and we can work something out. It is also your responsibility to get workshop drafts to and from those in your group.

For the 45 points of your participation grade, you'll earn a 35 if you're doing the basics of engaging with the class and participating in discussion; you'll earn a 35+ if I see you regularly leaping in and making strong contributions; you'll earn a 34 or lower if you are frequently late, unprepared, inattentive, disruptive, or do not regularly participate in discussion. Missing workshop critiques or absences on workshop days will result in -10 points from your participation grade for each component missed.

WORKSHOP

Workshop participation and attendance is mandatory. Throughout the semester we will be reading and critiquing one another's essays in small groups and as a whole class. You will turn in a typed copy of your critique to me, as well as to the member of your group who is being workshopped (this will affect your participation/workshop grades). Workshop is not a time to disparage or rudely comment on the work of others. Written critiques balance positive and critical comments, though criticism should certainly be constructive and focused on the writing, not on the writer or the writer's ability. If there are problems with feedback you receive, do not hesitate to contact me. Workshop should be a safe space where we work together to better one another's writing; thus, the amount of effort you put into commenting on the work of others should be just as much as you put into producing your own work. See above for workshop grade specifics.

TURNING IN ASSIGNMENTS

All **major assignments** must be printed out and turned in hard-copy during the class period on the day they are due.

SUBJECT MATTER

This course will ask you to write whatever you want to write about, but do recognize that there is a line between what is appropriate and not appropriate in a classroom setting, especially with regard to what is being shared with your classmates, who may not share your values. I respect your privacy and truly believe that this class should allow you creative freedom, so all I will ask is that you use common sense with regard to what is/is not appropriate to write in an academic setting. If you are unsure/nervous or have a hunch that something might be questionable, PLEASE discuss your ideas with me in advance of bringing them to workshop.

[ONLY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES MAJORS]

At least one of your creative projects this semester needs to connect topically to environmental concerns.

PREPARATION

You will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss readings, share your work, and comment on other students' work. Being prepared for each class is vital in creating a classroom that is conducive to learning—take notes on the assigned readings as this allows you to remember the material more fully. Back up your written work as you're responsible for turning work in on the due dates. You are also expected to regularly check your PLNU email for updates to the schedule and assignments.

GRADING RATIONALE

Creative writing is both an art and a craft. While it is debated by many whether art can be graded, craft can be evaluated. In particular I will look for:

- Adherence to and mastery of CNF conventions
- Structure and form as they pertain to CNF subgenre and subject
- Masterful use of narrative voice and point of view
- Engaging employment of language
- Excellence of writing mechanics
- Improvement through revision

- Creativity and innovation within genre conventions

While the above concerns creative work produced in this course, each creative assignment also requires a Critical Analysis component in which you as the artist will critique the decisions that went into your own work, and connect craft decisions you made with those used by the writers of our course readings. These Critical Analyses will be graded not as creative work, but upon the clarity and thoughtfulness of the analysis you craft.

DUE DATES

Assigned work will have a due date and you will be expected to meet this requirement. Missed in-class work may not be made up unless you have an excused absence. I will accept the major projects one class period late, but your paper will be penalized one letter grade (A → B as maximum grade). Major projects turned in after that point will receive a score of 0. You must turn in all four major projects to pass this course. Failure to do so will result in a grade of F.

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.

For this course, the final will be an in-class reading from your final project during the final exam. Our scheduled final exam time is **Thursday, November 19, 10:30am-1:00pm**. Since the final is a class activity, it cannot be rescheduled, so make sure that you will be able to attend.

LETTER GRADE GUIDELINES

		920 - 1000 points	A	900 - 919 points	A-
880 - 899 points	B+	820 - 879 points	B	800 - 819 points	B-
780 - 799 points	C+	720 - 779 points	C	700 - 719 points	C-
680 - 699 points	D+	620 - 679 points	D	600 - 619 points	D-

ACADEMIC HONESTY

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.

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 ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

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

PERSONAL NEEDS

Counseling is available in the Wellness Center for undergraduate students at PLNU. They are open Monday through Friday during the academic school year to offer morning, afternoon, and evening appointments. Please call (619) 849-2574 to schedule a counseling appointment.

COURSE SCHEDULE

- Week 1 **Course Introduction and Intro to Creative Nonfiction (CNF)/Voice in CNF**
08/18 – In Class: Syllabus; Art and Craft.
- 08/20 – In Class: Fundamentals of Creative Writing Overview
Readings Due:
“Creative Nonfiction” pgs. 225-236
“The Book of My Life” – Alexander Hemon, pgs. 109-111
[*Canvas*]:
“Tigers” – Eliot Weinberger
- Week 2 **Voice in CNF; Point of View/I & Eye/Researched CNF**
08/24 – In Class: Voice in Creative Nonfiction; Project 1 Overview; Lit Journal
Project Overview
Readings Due:
“Voice” pgs. 47-61
“Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self” – Alice Walker, pgs. 62-67
[*Canvas*]:
“What to do with My Body in the Event I Die in a Mass Shooting” – Tom
McAllister
- 08/27 – In Class: Point of View/I & Eye
Readings Due:
“Do He Have Your Number, Mr. Jeffrey?” – Gayle Pemberton, pgs. 237-
245
“The Female Body” – Margaret Atwood, pgs. 245-247
“Margot’s Diary” – S.L. Wisenberg, pgs. 247-251
[*Canvas*]:
“Field Guide to Resisting Temptation” – Sarah Wells
- Week 3 **Personal Essays, Image in CNF, and Researched Essays**
09/01 – In Class: Personal Essays; Discuss Workshop Procedure
Readings Due:
“Me vs. Animals” – Benjamin Percy, pgs. 112-117
[*Canvas*]:
“The Wishbone” – Harrison Scott Key
- 09/03 – In Class: Researched Essays
Readings Due:
[*Canvas*]:
“Jumbo II” – Elena Passarello
- Week 4 **Image and Structure in CNF**
09/08 – In Class: Concrete vs. Abstract Images, and Elane Johnson
Readings Due:

“Image” pgs. 15-27
“Heaven and Earth in Jest” – Annie Dillard, pgs. 28-29
“Standing By” – David Sedaris, pgs. 29-33
“At the Dam” – Joan Didion, pgs. 148-150

09/10 – In Class: Structure in CNF
Readings Due:
[Canvas]:
“Time and Distance Overcome” – Eula Biss
“A Scientific Analysis of Disney Movie Sidekicks Through The Lens Of
Hip Hop” – Hanif Abdurraqib
Group A Nonfiction Drafts Due

Week 5 **Workshop**

09/15 – **Workshop Group A**
Group A Critique Letters Due
Group B Nonfiction Drafts Due

09/17 – **Group B Workshop**
Group B Critique Letters Due

Week 6 **Intro to Fiction and Character in Fiction**

09/22 – In Class: Introduction to Fiction; Project 2 Overview
Readings Due:
“Fiction” pgs. 259-270
“The Story” – Amy Bloom, pgs. 270-279
Project 1—Creative Nonfiction Due

09/24 – In Class: Character in Fiction
Readings Due:
“Character” pgs. 94-109
“Incarnations of Burned Children” – David Foster Wallace, pgs. 179-181
[Canvas]:
“Hills Like White Elephants” – Ernest Hemingway

Week 7 **Voice and Setting in Fiction**

09/29 – In Class: Voice in Fiction
Readings Due:
“Voice” pgs. 47-61 (review)
“Victory Lap” – George Saunders, pgs. 69-82
“The School” – Donald Barthelme, pgs. 150-153

10/01 – In Class: Breeann Kirby: Fictional Setting
Readings Due:
TBD

Week 8 **Story and Image in Fiction**

10/06 – In Class: Story in Fiction
Readings Due:
“Story” pgs. 166-175
“The Werewolf” – Angela Carter, pgs. 153-154
“One of Us Is Hidden Away” – Scott Blackwood, pgs. 181-186
“Bigfoot Stole My Wife” – Ron Carlson, pgs. 290-294

10/08 – In Class: Image in Fiction
Readings Due:
“Image” pgs. 15-27 (review)
“Bullet in the Brain” – Tobias Woolf, pgs. 34-37
“Girl” – Jamaica Kincaid, pgs. 38-39
Group A Fiction Workshop Drafts Due

Week 9 **Fiction Workshop**

10/13 – **Workshop Group A**
Group A Critique Letters Due
Group B Fiction Workshop Drafts Due

10/15 – **Group B Workshop**
Group B Critique Letters Due

Week 10 **Introduction to Poetry and Setting and Story in Poetry**

10/20 – In class: Katie Manning and Introduction to Poetry
Readings Due:
“Poetry” pgs. 297-317
Assorted poems and Poetry Format – pgs. 318-326
Project 2—Fiction Due

10/22 – In Class: Setting & Story in poetry; discuss readings
Readings Due:
“Setting” pgs. 135-148
Assorted poems – pgs. 154-157
“Story” pgs. 166-175 (review—come to class with questions)
Assorted poems – pgs. 187-189

Week 11 **Voice and Character in Poetry**

10/27 – In Class: Voice in Poetry
“Voice” pgs. 47-61 (review—come to class with questions)
Assorted poems – pgs. 85-88

10/29 – In Class: Character in Poetry; discuss readings; discuss Lit Journal Report
“Character” pgs. 94-109
Assorted poems – pgs. 127-130

Week 12 **Submitting Work to Lit Journals, Revision, and Workshop**

11/03 – Read Assorted Poems on Canvas
Group 1 Poetry Workshop Drafts Due

11/05 – *Poetry Workshop Group 1*
Critique Letters Due for Group 1
Group 2 Poetry Workshop Drafts Due

Week 13 **Workshop**

11/10 – *Poetry Workshop Group 2*
Critique Letters Due for Group 2
Group 3 Poetry Workshop Drafts Due

11/12 – *Poetry Workshop Group 3*
Critique Letters Due for Group 2
Project 3—Poetry Due (if you will revise the Poetry Project for the Final Revision/Expansion Project)

Week 14 **Final Exam Week**

11/17 – **NO CLASS—FINALS WEEK**

11/19 – **FINAL EXAM PERIOD: 10:30am-1:00pm: Thursday, November 19**
Lit. Journal Presentations
Lit. Journal Report Due
Project 3—Poetry Due (if you will revise the Nonfiction or Fiction Project for the Final Revision/Expansion Project)

Week 15 **Finals Week Lit. Journal Presentations**

11/24 – In Class: Submitting to Lit Journals, Revision and Expansion, discuss the Final Revision Project
Readings due:
“Development and Revision” pgs. 195-218

11/26 – **NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Week 16 **Final: Reading from Final Revision Project**

12/01 – Reading from Final Revision: Group A

12/03 – Reading from Final Revision: Group B
Project 4—Revision/Expansion Due

** This schedule is subject to change at my discretion. I'll let you know with plenty of time if changes are made.