



LJWL(es)

WRI 4020 sec 1 (3)

Advanced Creative Writing

Spring 2021

<b>Meeting days:</b> T/R	<b>Instructor title and name:</b> Breeann Kyte Kirby
<b>Meeting times:</b> 3pm – 4:15pm	<b>Office:</b> BAC 122/ <a href="https://pointloma.zoom.us/j/3179624189">https://pointloma.zoom.us/j/3179624189</a>
<b>Meeting location:</b> Zoom (TBD)	<b>E-mail:</b> bkirby@pointloma.edu
<b>GroupMe:</b> WRI4020	<b>Instagram:</b> @naturenarratives
<b>Final Exam:</b> T/ 8 June 4:30pm	<b>Office location and 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 is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

## FAQ

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

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

As a capstone course, the goal of WRI 4020 is for you to engage in a rigorous and reflective semester where you will look back at your career as a writer in LWJL as well as produce a major project that will be ready for publication or submission in an application. As I'm sure you've heard over and over, 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 be part of a community of writers who are all "training" in their practice. You will continue to develop the skills that are needed to both read critically and write strategically at an advanced level with the goal you will produce works that will be able to live in the world outside academia. To this end, we will read and listen to guests share about the business of being a writer, read and discuss your own work-in-progress in workshop settings, write together in class, and talk about publication and writing life beyond school. Your final portfolio will be a summation of your growth as a writer at PLNU as well as a springboard to launch you into your writing future.

The PLNU Catalog describes WRI 4020 as “A senior-level capstone course for writing majors and an advanced course for non-majors providing guided workshops, advanced practice, and advanced instruction in writing techniques and publication strategies used by professional writers.”

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

1. Apply artistry and advanced skills in various forms and genres of writing;
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and terminology of various forms and genres of writing;
3. Engage in writing and editorial processes in a professional environment;
4. Present written work to live audiences, demonstrating strategies for audience engagement and oral communication.

The **Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)** for this class are as follows:

1. Identify targeted aspects of the writing craft in professional works of various genres;
2. Employ research techniques as necessary to create advanced works that address the demands of their genres;
3. Craft original creative work as part of a self-assigned, focused project;
4. Apply professional writing and formatting techniques in a portfolio of work suitable for grad school or writing career applications;
5. Apply workshop techniques for constructive criticism of peers and in turn take criticism and use it to improve their own work;
6. Format texts in a genre-appropriate and professional manner for submission to workshop and publication;
7. Present written work to live audiences, demonstrating strategies for audience engagement and oral communication.

### **Why do I have to take this class?**

The short answer is that unless you are a writing major, you don't have to take this class, and if you are a writing major, this course is the capstone course for the writing program: it allows you to demonstrate the culmination of your skills as a writer. The better answer is that this class will make you a better critical thinker and writer—skills you can take from the classroom into many areas of your life. Being able to read, analyze, synthesize, and write effectively gives you agency<sup>1</sup> in whatever field you may enter.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES**

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### **What do I have to buy for this class?**

1. Friedman, Jane. *The Business of Being a Writer*. Chicago Univ Press, 2018.  
ISBN: 978-0-226-39316-2
2. Printouts from Canvas as well as your essays— plan your money accordingly (~\$50)
  - a. You will make copies of various pieces in your portfolios for the class to workshop

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<sup>1</sup> The ability to act with power and authority.

- b. Part of your grade will be printing out some essays on Canvas, annotating them, and turning them in to me.
3. Pocket folder (not a three-ring binder) to turn in your work.
4. Various office supplies (highlighters, pens, stapler, Scotch tape, paper for notes)

*\*\*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. 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.\*\**

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

Yes. The following are a few of my favorites.

**Tutorial Services** (i.e. tutoring, paper editing, review sessions & Academic Coaching) will be offered virtually during the 2020/21 academic year via *Brainfuse* and select Review Sessions will be conducted in Canvas. *Brainfuse* allows students to be tutored by faculty-recommended PLNU tutors and non-PLNU tutors. Tutorial services via *Brainfuse* include live tutoring, writing labs, and language labs for foreign languages. Tutoring in *Brainfuse* has the capabilities of screen sharing, smartboards, and audio/video capabilities. You can contact tutorial services at [TutorialServices@pointloma.edu](mailto:TutorialServices@pointloma.edu).

**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. While I love Wikipedia for its ability to quickly provide information, DO NOT use this as a source for your papers.

**Me** I am available to answer any questions you may have. You can schedule appointments to see me in class or email me—**please include “WRI 4020” in the subject** line of your emails to me.

## **ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

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### **How do I pass this class?**

1. Come to class
2. Do all the assignments
3. Turn them in on time

### **What specifically does that look like?**

This course has two goals: a capstone project that you can take into the world outside academia and a portfolio that is a summation of your evolution as a writer at PLNU. To these ends, we will

spend time examining yourself, the business of being a writer, and workshopping/revising piece(s) for publication or a graduate school application.

That's a lot to pack into a semester course that meets for about an hour a few days a week. But we're going to give it the clichéd good college try by writing often. Writing skill is like a human muscle, if you exercise it regularly, it gets strong and doing the work gets easier.

Some of the writing will be curated pieces you've already written that exemplify you as a writer and a reflective essay. The capstone project will also be part of your portfolio. With this portfolio, I aim for you to gain insight into your writing niche or genre as well as insight into what kind of writing career (if any) you would want to pursue.

With all the writing we will do, the main thing is that you get your ideas clearly down on paper. Expressing your ideas well is the hardest part of being a writer (or any type of artist really). How many of us have had such a great image/story/idea in our heads but when we set it down on paper, it just looks flat (hee! See what I did there?)? I emphasize revision and process because most of us need to produce what Anne Lamott calls "shitty first drafts" before we can see where our ideas need work. Ideally for your capstone project, you already have a "shitty first draft" somewhere that you want to develop. But even if you do or don't, all of you will be heavily revising your capstone project so that it is the best you can possibly make it. And you will help each other find the good ideas, the clever sentences, and solid descriptions within your drafts, turning those first drafts into coherent and engaging final products. In those initial versions of a piece, you may not have perfect grammar, that's okay—no writer ever does. In the process of revision, the grammar gets cleaned up.

Writing is less like chipping away at a marble sculpture to reveal a finished piece and more like a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly: the end product may look nothing like your first draft. But the first draft carried all the source ideas (the DNA if you will) that lets you break your piece down to primordial goo and rebuild it as a butterfly.

There will be some sort of writing due almost every week, and the weeks we don't have anything due, I will be checking in to make sure that you are producing wordcount for your capstone project or revising it after a workshop. This isn't to scare you but to let you know the pacing of the writing.

**So does this mean that my first drafts can be some stream of consciousness string of text I wrote during chapel right before class?**

Nope. That is not a first draft. That is what my writer friend calls "draft 0" and I call "spew." That in-chapel, quick putting down of your ideas is a NECESSARY part of writing, but not the "shitty first draft" that others can work with. Going back to our caterpillar/butterfly analogy: a caterpillar may look nothing like a butterfly, but it's still a viable organism—it can live and breathe on its own. Your first draft needs to look like a caterpillar.

**Okay that’s all fancy words and images but what does that practically look like in my busy life as a college student? What’s the bare minimum I can get away with in a draft?**

Unless done in class, your first draft needs to be

- a. Typed and double spaced in the appropriate format (the default is MLA);
- b. Demonstrate you have been thinking about the problem/topic you are writing about;
- c. Be free of typos.

**Ha! So I do have to have perfect grammar in my first draft!**

No. Typos are not grammar mistakes. Typos are ignoring the things that you already do proficiently in your writing on social media, email, and texting. Things like not putting a period at the end of a sentence Or not capitalizing my name, which is Breeann Kirby (another typo is spelling my name wrong—or your name, for that matter). Or when you are writing.<sup>2</sup> You need to have complete thoughts. Typos are one of my HUGE pet peeves. They are not just mistakes but a sign of disrespect to me and your peers who will be working with your writing. Most typos can be easily caught if you read through your paper at least once before you turn it in (pro tip: read your paper out loud. You’ll catch a lot of stuff that way.) 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).

**What are the specific assignments?**

**Contract (5%)** You will write a contract that will establish the grade you desire in this class and the expectations we will both fulfill for you to earn that grade. You will evaluate it once at the midterm.

**Workshop (15%)** We will workshop your Capstone Writing Project (or sections of it) as an entire class throughout the semester. You will be required to write **Workshop Critiques** of at least 500 words for each of your colleagues’ submissions to workshop.

**Scholarship Map (3%)** For this assignment, you will make a visual map of how your time and courses taken at PLNU have influenced your mental landscape.

**Annotated Bibliography (5%)** You will compile a list of works you feel have been meaningful to your development as a writer and thinker. This assignment will have a minimum of 10 sources. They can be pieces you’ve read for fun or had in other classes.

**Two Best (3%)** For this assignment, you should identify two pieces of writing that you consider your best work and write a short explanation to accompany your selections.

**Presentations (14%)** You will give two presentations in this course. One will be about your capstone writing project and the other about where you would like to place your writing project (agent, publisher, graduate program, etc . . .).

**Portfolio (35%)** Your portfolio will be specific to you so they all will differ in length and content, but all will demonstrate reflection on your evolution as a writer at PLNU and engagement in major revision of your work and include the following:

**Introductory Reflection Essay (5%)** This essay will be a critical reflection of yourself as a writer, using the elements of your portfolio as supporting evidence for your claims.

**Table of Contents (1%)**

**Capstone Writing Project Proposal (7%)** This will be a formal document that outlines what you intend to do as your Capstone Writing Project.

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<sup>2</sup> Note the three typos here.

**Query Letter for Capstone Writing Project (5%)** This letter will vary depending on whether you are seeking representation, publication, or admission to graduate school.

**Three artifacts from your time at PLNU (3%)** These do not need to be revised, but they need to be intentionally chosen to demonstrate your evolution as a writer and thinker at PLNU. You will explain your choices in your Introductory Reflection Essay.

**Capstone Writing Project (14%)** This project can be whatever you choose: honors project, novel draft, chapbook of poems, screenplay, or three smaller pieces like magazine articles, short stories, or at least 15 poems. While I'm cool if you want to write something new for this class, I'd advise that you might want to revise work you've already done.

**Final Reading (10%)** For your final, you will give a public reading from a selection of your Capstone Writing Project.

**Reading and Discussion (10%):** 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 in class and via email (when appropriate) as well as engage in the thinking/writing/drafting/revision process. Effective learning happens in a dynamic environment. Therefore, you must interact with the instructor and the other students regularly. If you wish to earn this grade, you must have a good attitude; you must read all of the readings; you must do the participation assignments on Canvas or in class; and you must speak out. Make it your goal to come up with one good thought for every module and to share it. If we meet face-to-face, you must turn off your cell phones when you enter the classroom; use of cell phones will not be permitted unless you have an academic accommodation OR I give you specific permission. Other electronic reading devices are allowed for days we write or to access the reading in digital format; **however, if you use your device to disengage from course discussion, I will sweetly ask you to leave that day and try again next time.**

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

**There are other people in this course and I am shy about speaking or sharing my writing publicly. Do I really have to talk and share my work? And if I do, how do I know that I will not be treated unkindly?**

First, I feel you. I actually have a strong sense of stranger danger and hate talking in front of people. I am nervous every time I teach, but practice has made it easier and easier.

Second, it is important for you to practice speaking and sharing writing publicly now when you are in a safe space with an advocate (me); again, practice will make it easier and easier. Respect in this course is a must. Again, this course is a safe space. As we discuss and analyze each other's works that may address potentially emotional topics, we will encounter many different viewpoints within the course. Much of the work we will do in this course is cooperative. You should think of all your reading, writing, and speaking for and in course as public, not private, discourse. **By continuing in this course, you acknowledge that your work will be viewed by others in the course.**

For those of you who are already strong and confident in your opinions and abilities, be sensitive to others who are not. Sometimes take the lead in recognizing when others want to talk,

asking them for their opinion and feedback. In order to be a good participant in this course, you must be sensitive to your fellow learners, recognizing them as human just as you are.

As we share our work, personal insults and comments will not be tolerated. I will ask you to leave the discussion or class if you cannot be kind. If you aren't sure how to phrase your opinion, please ask me.

For all of us, assume the best about the person speaking. Sometimes we need to hear what we are saying before we understand exactly what we are saying. Ask for clarification; respectfully disagree. The best rule to follow: **be kind**.

**A lot of course discussion seems to come from our outside experiences and opinions, do I need to take notes?**

Absolutely. Note taking is a valuable skill in every discipline and should be practiced whenever possible. Sometimes I may SPEAK information during lecture that is important. It is your responsibility as an active participant to take notes.

**IF WE MEET F2F: This is COVID-times, will I be required to wear a mask in class?**

Absolutely yes. I know that different groups of people have differing opinions about masks, and I respect the conclusions that all of us have come to about this highly unfashionable and uncomfortable item of clothing. However, I'm going to follow PLNU's official policy that while we are face-to-face all of us will wear masks give each other at least 6 feet of social distance. Even if you aren't masking and distancing elsewhere, I'm asking you to respect these requirements while you are in my course. If you don't want to wear a mask, I respect that choice, but I will ask you to leave our gathering and complete the participation via the online options that I have provided.

Here is some official PLNU language about COVID-19 safety in class:

*Everyone in class will wear a face covering, unless there is a documented health related issue. If so, students should work with the Disability Resource Center to discuss their needs. The instructor can also use a face shield in place of a mask if at least 6ft distanced from everyone, if closer instruction is needed, they must use a face covering, either by itself or under their face shield.*

*A face shield is not an acceptable replacement for students, unless worn over a face covering. Faculty are being allowed this adjustment to aid students who may be hearing impaired and facial gestures or reading of lips is needed.*

*If a student arrives in class and is not wearing a face covering, the faculty will ask them to wear one. If the student refuses, the faculty will ask the student to excuse themselves from class. If the student refuses, the faculty member will call campus safety to escort the student. In either refusal case, a conversation should be scheduled between the chair of the department and student. Failure to follow communicated health guidelines will be considered a violation of the Student Handbook and can result in student conduct sanctions up to and including loss of housing privileges or suspension. These sanctions will be communicated by a Resident Director or the Dean of Students.*

### **What if I've had the vaccine or COVID already?**

Right now, the research hasn't clarified if someone who has the vaccine can still shed enough virus to infect another person and research is showing that there are multiple strains of SARS COV-2 (the name of the virus that gives us COVID—CORona Virus Disease) that can reinfect even a person with antibodies to another strain. While most of us may be healthy and not too concerned about the effects COVID may have on us, we don't know each other's personal situations outside of the class. Perhaps someone has a person in their home who is high risk and wasn't able to get the vaccine. It is an act of kindness to continue to wear a mask even if you are no longer threatened because someone else may still be.

### **OMG I am SO tired of COVID and masks!!!**

Trust me: we all are.

### **How will I know my grade in the class?**

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. A written contract is due the third week of course that states the grade you intend to earn in the course as well as the work you will do to meet contract; I will then ensure you meet your learning goals. At the midterm, you will evaluate your contract and contribution to the course. You are free to change your mind during the semester about what grade you wish to earn, but we must then meet to negotiate your new contract.

For many of my classes, I give a scaffolding of what an A, B, or C contract should contain. However, this course is a bit different because it is a capstone course so you must complete all the assignments. Therefore, I would like you to devise what you think an A, B, or C contract would look like. If you do have a bit of anxiety about that, I'm thinking that in doing ALL the assignments to an acceptable level, you would earn a B. An A would denote excellence and dedication in the completion of those assignments. For a C grade, I'm willing to meet one-on-one and chat about what that contract could look like.

For all grade contracts, you will be an active and positive contributor to our classes, offering a respectful spirit and coming up with insightful ideas and worthwhile feedback. Though you will not get an individual score on your papers, I will give you one opportunity to redo the work if it does not meet contract standards. This redo is due back to me the next day the class meets. **If I accept your work, it means you met contract and are earning the grade you chose.**

I will not accept work that does not meet with the quality expected of your stated contract. If you do not quality work, then I will not accept it. There can be variable effort and quality put in at any contract level. Thus, you can earn a minus (-) or a plus (+)—pluses are for B and C contracts only (sorry there are no A+s, but you are all A+ in my heart).



We'll spend a few moments the first day of class to discuss contract options and what guidelines you want as a class.

**A note on how much time you should spend on an assignment:** While, I have listed the assignments as percentages of your grade, I also have determined how long it should take for you to complete each one. To meet accreditation, you are expected to spend 112.5 - 120 hours on this course (~37.5 hours per unit). Below is the breakdown of hours to reach that goal:

Hours	Activity	
10	Reading the Textbook	
38	Class Participation (including meeting, various activities, and listening to lectures)	
64.5	Assignments	
	Contract	1
	Scholarship Map	1.5
	Annotated Bibliography	1.5
	Two Best	2
	Presentations	6
	Workshop	12
	Portfolio	
	Reflection Essay	2
	Table of Contents	1
	Proposal	3
	Query Letter	2
	Writing Project (three drafts + revision)	30
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>	Final	2.5
<b>112.5</b>		

Of course, some of you will take shorter or longer to do a particular activity. The goal here isn't to be perfectly accurate, just fair in assessment of how long an activity should take you. If my estimates are off, please let me know so I can revise this time-table for the future.

**Speaking of hours, I just looked at the schedule outline and noticed that some weeks have an estimate of 13-16 hours of work!! Don't you know/care that I have other classes?**

Yes, I know and care that you have a full course load and that this course is only three units out of 15-18 units you may be taking. This is why I took the time to figure out the hours for assignments, reading, and participation so that I wouldn't be unfair in my expectations. The calculations for the weekly hours is a worst case scenario if you happen to push off working on a project until the week it is due. My actual expectation is that you'll note your larger projects and allocate time across the semester (especially on light weeks) to work a little bit on them at a time. This way, you won't have any 16-hour weeks because you'll have prepped ahead.

**It's halfway through the course, and I haven't had any emails from you about my grade. How will I know if I am awesome and still on contract? Should I be nervous?**

First, you are awesome! Never doubt that. Your grades do not make you an awesome person; how you engage in life does. But I know we all care about grades, so second, if you are doing the assignments according to one of the contracts listed above and you have not heard from me about them, it means that you are doing a great job and are on track for your contracted grade. The only time I will initiate contact about your grade is if you are NOT meeting your contract. However, you are always welcome to ask me about your grade or performance in course at any time in the semester.

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

**Will you assign extra credit?**

During a given semester, opportunities for extra credit may arise. These assignments are often difficult. These tasks give you a chance to make up elements of our contract; 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 4020**. If you don't, I will sweetly remind you to format your email correctly.

Also, I have set up a GroupMe for our class. You can join here:

[https://groupme.com/join\\_group/65315036/bIP57GXt](https://groupme.com/join_group/65315036/bIP57GXt) or through the email invitation I sent you. You may text me through that as well. You are welcome to text me at any time; however, I will commit to being responsive to your texts between the hours of 9am and 8pm, Monday-Thursday. If you text outside of those hours, I may or may not respond right away. ALSO, if you direct message me, sometimes GroupMe hides the initial chat and I won't see it. So the first time you DM me, please also send an email to let me know to look for you.

Finally, I am on Instagram as @naturenarratives. You can follow and DM me there. I will not follow you unless you give me permission to do so. I will post weekly writing prompts with #WRI4020prompts. So if you feel stuck in your craft, you can go check those out.

I also have an extensive FAQ on Instagram as it pertains to this class in your “Do This Before Anything” Module.

## **INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

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

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the dates noted in the week’s module—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

That said, life happens to all of us, including me. So sometimes we miss deadlines. If this happens to you, please talk to me if you know you will miss one ahead of time OR email me immediately if you do miss one. Remember to put **WRI 4020** in the subject of your email, or I will sweetly request that you do so before addressing your concerns.

If you habitually turn in late assignments, you risk negating your contract. We will talk about this further as a class to discuss what is a reasonable policy to accommodate our workshop schedule.

### **What if you don’t accept an assignment?**

If your assignment does not meet the standard of our contract, I will hand it back to you. You will then have until the following Monday to revise it to meet contract.

### **What if I don’t turn in an assignment at all?**

I will still like you. However, failing to do assignments (or adequately revising any ones I request) will result in a voided contract and possibly a letter grade of D or F for the course. Of course, you should chat with me about any circumstances that maybe had you miss an assignment because we may be able to revise your contract to a satisfactory end.

## **PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY**

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You must participate to pass the class. However, I do understand that emergencies do come up. If you do choose to skip a portion of the course, you are responsible for the material covered and assignments given/due. **You must get this information from another student (not your instructor).**

As PLNU notes,

*Regular and punctual attendance at all **synchronous** class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions (virtual or face-to-face), the faculty member will issue a written warning of 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. In some courses, a portion of the credit hour content will be delivered **asynchronously** and attendance will be determined by submitting the assignments by the posted due dates. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog. If absences exceed these limits but are due to university excused health issues, an exception will be granted.*

### **Asynchronous Attendance/Participation Definition**

A day of attendance in asynchronous content is determined as contributing a substantive note, assignment, discussion, or submission by the posted due date. Failure to meet these standards will result in an absence for that day. Instructors will determine how many asynchronous attendance days are required each week.

Distracting and disruptive behavior will be considered an absence.

### **I still don't get it. What is the difference between fully online and hybrid?**

This is something that is confusing many students in part because there are other terms you have to know as well.

\*Fully Online means that you will do all your coursework and class meetings through a device in an asynchronous format.

\*Hybrid means that part of your coursework and class meetings are synchronous and may be on a device and part may be F2F.

\*Remote Learning means that you will do all your coursework and class meetings through a device in a synchronous format.

\*Face-to-Face (F2F) means that you will meet in person for each class period and some of your coursework.

And here are the pesky terms a lot of you aren't getting: **synchronous and asynchronous.**

\*Synchronous means that you will meet at a specific times and days each week as a class.

\*Asynchronous means that you will not have a specific meeting time and can do your coursework and engagement with each other on your own time as long as you meet due dates and deadlines.

Many of you are confusing remote learning (synchronous) with fully online (asynchronous). While you were given a choice to opt out of hybrid or F2F teaching this semester, in most cases you were not offered a fully online option. Most classes are designed to be hybrid or remote learning.

So how do you know what is what?

1. Look at your schedule. If there are course days and times listed (such as this course meeting T/R), then chances are the course will be synchronous whether you are hybrid, F2F, or remote learning. If there aren't any days and times listed, then the course is probably asynchronous and fully online.
2. Email the professor and ask using the words "synchronous" and "asynchronous." That's a bit more clear because we all are mixing up what fully online and remote learning means.

This is my own 2 cents here: I know that some of you got jobs that aren't respectful of a full-time student load. My advice is to revise your job situation. PLNU is not the kind of university where you can work a full-time job that doesn't have flexible hours during the day. And even though this semester is still pretty wonky as far as organization goes, you are doing yourself a disservice

if you try to squeeze your courses into your working life rather than vice versa. You are paying a lot of money for this education. Treat it like the main job.<sup>3</sup>

**Okay, Prof. Kirby, that's all well and good but it is COVID-times and I want to know about YOUR class. So what if we aren't meeting as a class or I catch Miss Rona or I have clearance to take this class fully online?**

Because this is COVID-times and things get squirrely fast, I have tried to build in flexibility within our course for the contingency that we won't be meeting face to face. Thus, I've designed this course as a **limited synchronous F2F hybrid**. What that means is content will be available via videos and "Craft Resources" pages in the weekly Canvas modules, and our face-to-face time will be reserved for group discussion of the text, clarification of content, and other participation/writerly activities. These activities will also have a counterpart on Canvas or via Zoom if we aren't able to meet F2F. I will expect you to have read and familiarized yourself with the "Craft Resources" **BEFORE** we meet.

**How is this class working as a hybrid? I've never taken one of those kinds of classes before except for last semester which was really hard.**

I've never taught this course as a hybrid, and last fall was my first attempt at online. So we are in the same boat. I've spent the summer and fall doing a lot of learning about how hybrid and online courses function, and I have definitely learned: **IT WILL NOT BE THE SAME AS A FULLY FACE-TO-FACE COURSE**. I think it's important for us all to note and mourn that there is an element of connection and accountability that will be lost in this format, especially if we can't meet at all. At times, it may feel weird and lonely. But deep breath. We are in this together and I've set up some things that I hope will ensure your success in the class.

1. **All online content will be asynchronous.** This will allow those of us who perhaps have to take this course remote the breathing room to address whatever else is going on in their lives.
2. **We will meet every THURSDAY** for class discussion/workshops (either F2F or Zoom).
3. **There is an OPTIONAL TUESDAY writing space** on Zoom from 2-4pm. Here you can join me in parallel play of writing with a camera on you. I don't care what you work on and you can pop in and out as you need to. I know that I need time in my writing practice and I wanted to offer that same space to you. You can access this space via my zoom information at the top of this syllabus.
4. **MANDATORY class meeting time.**
  - a. We are meeting synchronously for the first day of class (you have received an email invitation in your Google Calendar for this).
  - b. Everyone must meet the days we workshop.
  - c. We will meet on certain Thursdays via Zoom for guest speakers as outlined in your course schedule (a separate Zoom calendar link will be provided for these)
5. **Critique letters are due 11:59 the day before the person will be workshopped.**

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<sup>3</sup> I paid for my own college and graduated in heaps of debt that I am still paying off, so I am not treating working or debt lightly. I'm just offering from my own experience as someone who had to work through college: treat the education like the investment it is.

6. **The course is divided into weekly modules.** Each module will open at 10pm on the Sunday of its week and will close at 11:59pm on Saturday. This is to give you a few glorious hours where you have to take a bit of a break in that gap on Sunday. Have a sabbath; rest.
7. **All Assignments/Activities are due Wednesdays by 11:59pm.** This is so that we can have something to discuss on our Thursday meetings.
8. **Any comments (except for workshop critique letters) on Assignments/Activities are due by Saturdays 11:59pm.**

Though I've done a lot of learning this summer and fall about online and hybrid writing courses, abstract learning is not the same as actually doing it. As the course continues, I expect us to have to tweak a few things once we get an idea of how this type of course is best organized. **Your feedback is important!** Please let me know how you are doing in this course and if this structure is working. We can do this together! Let's be flexible and kind to each other as we work through this semester.

Here are some ground rules we can all follow:

1. Be kind to each other. This is super stressful for all of us and it's frustrating to have it drag on for so long. What we need first and foremost is compassion for all of our situations.
2. Be patient and flexible. We may attempt things that don't work out. One of us may come up with a better idea of how to make things work better. Engage. You'll get more out of the class the more you engage. Give me suggestions!
3. Communicate. If something seems off or unclear, please kindly (see point 1) bring it up. My goal is that you all succeed and finish this semester strong, setting you up for your future.

**It's noon on Monday, and I can't access WEEK X's module!! What do I do?**

Breathe. Then, please see the "Help & Technical Support" link on the Homepage, and you can also send me an email, including **WRI 4020** in your subject line.

**What if I don't have good WIFI or a working computer?**

Please let me know. I can't help you if I don't know what your struggles are. While I won't be able to pay for your WIFI, I can direct you to places at PLNU that can help. Both the university and I are committed to your success. Specifically, if you don't have the necessary technology this semester (e.g. a laptop or access to reliable internet), please contact [student-tech-request@pointloma.edu](mailto:student-tech-request@pointloma.edu).

**FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY**

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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.

## PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

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

As Solomon wisely noted, “There is nothing new under the sun.” Thus, it is perfectly okay to reference other texts (written or visual) in your own writing. However, you must give credit to any ideas or sentences that are not originally yours or aren’t common knowledge. To omit doing this action is an act of plagiarism. 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 (such as taking suggestions from a professor or a peer), 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—even just a sentence—as your own). We will discuss this further in class.

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Any word or idea that is not your own must be cited correctly. As explained in the University Catalog,

*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.

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. If you’re wondering if you may have paraphrased too closely, be sure to ask before you turn in the assignment. You will not be penalized if you ask first.

## PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

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

While all students are expected to meet the minimum standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may require academic adjustments, modifications or auxiliary aids/services. At Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU), these students are requested to register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. ([DRC@pointloma.edu](mailto:DRC@pointloma.edu) or 619-849-2486). The DRC’s policies and procedures for assisting such students in the development of an appropriate academic adjustment plan (AP) allows PLNU to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Section 504 (a) prohibits discrimination against students with special needs and guarantees all qualified students equal access to and benefits of PLNU programs and activities. After the student files the required documentation, the DRC, in conjunction with the student, will develop an AP to meet that student’s specific learning needs. The DRC will thereafter email the

student's AP to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester. The AP must be implemented in all such courses.

If students do not wish to avail themselves of some or all of the elements of their AP in a particular course, it is the responsibility of those students to notify their professor in that course. PLNU highly recommends that DRC students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester about the applicability of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not desire to take advantage of some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

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



## COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

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### Schedule<sup>4</sup>

\*Subject to Change as needed to facilitate course goals.\*

\*\*Readings and assignments are due on the date listed.\*\*

\*\*\**BW* denotes readings from *The Business of Being a Writer*.\*\*\*

**REMEMBER: All assignments/activities (except critique letters) are DUE WEDNESDAY by 11:59pm. And all comments and workshop drafts are DUE SATURDAY by 11:59pm. Critique letters are due 11:59pm the day BEFORE the person will be workshopped.**

### WEEK 1 – Getting to Know You (Nuts and Bolts)

3/1 – 3/5 (~2.25hrs)

#### READ

Syllabus/FAQ

*BW* “Introduction,” “Can You Make a Living as a Writer,” “The Art of Career Building”;  
pp. 1 – 27

#### DO

"Do This Before Anything" Module

PARTICIPATION: Getting to Know You (Everyone)

PARTICIPATION: Four Tendencies (Everyone)

PARTICIPATION: Workshop Structure (Everyone)

### WEEK 2 – Get to Work or Stay in School?

3/8 – 3/12 (~5.25hrs)

#### READ

*BW* “Generating Leads, Gaining Exposure,” “Pursuing an MFA or Other Graduate Degree”; pp.  
28 – 39

*BW* “Trade Book Publishing,” “Magazine Publishing”; pp. 41 – 63

*BW* “Online and Digital Media”; pp. 64 – 70

#### DO

ASSIGNMENT: Scholarship Map

PARTICIPATION: Craft Resources

PARTICIPATION: Reading Takeaways (Everyone)

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<sup>4</sup> Note: 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. Every week, there will be a writing assignment of at least 1 to 3 pages.

**WEEK 3 – Publishing pt.1**  
**3/15 – 3/19 (~5.75hrs)**

**READ**

*BW* “Literary Publishing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”; pp. 71 – 79

*BW* “Publishing Short Stories, Personal Essays, or Poetry”; pp. 143 – 149

*BW* “Online Writing and Blogging”; pp. 160 – 170

**DO**

ASSIGNMENT: Contract for Grade (Everyone)

ASSIGNMENT: Annotated Bibliography

PARTICIPATION: Craft Resources

PARTICIPATION: Reading Takeaways (Everyone)

**WEEK 4 – Publishing pt.2**  
**3/22 – 3/26 (~7.25hrs)**

**Guest: Mat Rainey**

Bring 2 questions for Mat Rainey

**READ**

*BW* “Book Publishing: Figuring Out Where Your Book Fits”; “Understanding Literary Agents”; pp. 81 – 97

*BW* “Researching Agents and Publishers”; pp. 98 - 105

*BW* “Self-Publishing”; pp. 137 – 142

**DO**

Questions for Mat Rainey

ASSIGNMENT: Two Best

ASSIGNMENT: Proposal

PARTICIPATION: Craft Resources

PARTICIPATION: Reading Takeaways (Everyone)

**WEEK 5 – Publishing pt.3**  
**3/29 – 4/2 (~16.25hrs)**

**Guest: Arnee Flores (Big 5 and small press publishing)**

Bring 2 questions for Arnee Flores

**READ**

*BW* “Working With Your Publisher”; pp. 128 – 136

*BW* “Pursuing a Publishing Career,” “Corporate Media Careers”; pp. 266 - 276

**DO**

Questions for Arnee Flores

ASSIGNMENT: Presentation of Capstone Writing Project

ASSIGNMENT: Draft 1; submit via Canvas (<10K words)

PARTICIPATION: Craft Resources

PARTICIPATION: Reading Takeaways (Everyone)

**WEEK 6 – Workshop 1**  
**4/5 – 4/9 (~8hrs)**

**READ**

Each others' work!

**DO**

ASSIGNMENT: Critique Letters

**WEEK 7 – “SPRING BREAK”**  
**4/12 – 4/16**

**DO**

Write. Write. Write.  
Breathe.

**WEEK 8 – Platform and Positioning**  
**4/19 – 4/23 (~14.25hrs)**

**Guest: Crystal Ellefsen**

Bring 2 questions for Crystal Ellefsen

**READ**

BW “Author Platform,” “Your Online Presence: Websites, Social Media, and More”;  
pp. 171 – 194  
BW “Turning Attention into Sales,” “The Basics of Book Launches”; pp. 195 – 222

**DO**

Questions for Crystal Ellefsen  
ASSIGNMENT: Draft 2; submit via Canvas (<15K words)  
PARTICIPATION: Craft Resources  
PARTICIPATION: Reading Takeaways (Everyone)

**WEEK 9 – Workshop 2**  
**4/26 – 4/30 (~8hrs)**

**READ**

Each others' work!

**DO**

ASSIGNMENT: Critique Letters

**WEEK 10 – Freelancing**  
**5/3 – 5/7 (~3.25hrs)**

**Guest: Geoff Ledford (freelancing)**

Bring 2 questions for Geoff Ledford

**READ**

*BW* “Traditional Freelance Writing”; pp. 150 – 159

*BW* “Starting a Freelance Career,” “Freelance Editing and Related Services”; pp. 223 – 238

**DO**

Questions for Geoff Ledford

ASSIGNMENT: Contract Evaluation

PARTICIPATION: Craft Resources

PARTICIPATION: Reading Takeaways (Everyone)

**WEEK 11 – Proposals and Queries**  
**5/10 – 5/14 (~4.25hrs)**

**READ**

*BW* “Book Queries and Synopses,” “The Nonfiction Book Proposal”; pp. 106 – 127

*BW* “Appendices”; pp. 279 – 292

**DO**

ASSIGNMENT: Draft Query Letter

PARTICIPATION: Craft Resources

PARTICIPATION: Reading Takeaways (Everyone)

**WEEK 12 – Alternatives Way to Make Money as a Writer**  
**5/17 – 5/21 (~13.25hrs)**

**Guest: Ron Salisbury, San Diego Poet Laureate (live reading)**

**READ**

Questions for Ron Salisbury

*BW* “Teaching and Online Education,” pp. 239 – 244

*BW* “Memberships, Subscriptions, and Paywalls”; 257 – 260

*BW* “Advertising and Affiliate Income,” pp. 261 – 265

*BW* “Contests, Prizes, Grants, Fellowships,” “Crowdfunding and Donations”; pp. 245 - 256

**DO**

ASSIGNMENT: Draft 3; Submit Via Canvas (<15K words)

PARTICIPATION: Craft Resources

PARTICIPATION: Reading Takeaways (Everyone)

**WEEK 13 – Workshop 3**  
**5/24 – 5/28 (~8hrs)**

**READ**

Each others' work!

**DO**

ASSIGNMENT: Critique Letters

**WEEK 14 – Work on Portfolio**  
**5/31 – 6/4 (~9.25hrs)**

**DO**

ASSIGNMENT: Presentation of Piece Placement

PARTICIPATION: Craft Resources

PARTICIPATION: Reading Takeaways (Everyone)

**WEEK 15 – FINALS WEEK**  
**6/7 – 6/11 (~2.5hrs)**

TUESDAY 6/8; 4:30pm – 7pm: Reading from Capstone Project (Everyone)

ASSIGNMENT: Complete Portfolio Due