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|  | <b>Department of Communication Studies</b><br><br><b>TRE 3071-1 Playwriting</b><br><br><b>3 units</b> |
| Fall 2021   |   |

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| <b>Meeting days:</b> Tues/Thurs                            | <b>Instructor title and name:</b> Jamie Criss, MFA   |
| <b>Meeting times:</b> 3:00 - 4:15 pm                       | <b>Phone:</b> n/a  |
| <b>Meeting location:</b> Salomon Theatre                   | <b>Email:</b> jcriss@pointloma.edu   |
| <b>Final Exam:</b> Thursday, December 16th, 4:30 - 7:00 pm | <b>Office location and hours:</b> Cabrillo Annex 102 (next to mail pickup), 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.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will begin with a number of preliminary exercises, then move on to writing scenarios, and finally each will write a one act play to be performed at the One Act Festival.

### COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Read and analyze a play and identify basic dramatic three act structure.
2. Understand the breakdown of a scene and understand it's dynamics including premise, character, and conflict.
3. Write a scene with multiple characters employing the above elements.
4. Understand and employ the elements of style characteristic to a stage play.
5. Complete a one-act play for use in the PLNU One Act Play Festival for the spring.

6. Most importantly, rid the ego of all limiting beliefs and blockages, allowing their inner writer to be released and write in flow anytime they sit down to the page.

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

There is no required textbook for this course. However you will be assigned reading from PDFs that I will supply as well as reading whole plays. I suggest buying these used/online as the cost tends to be very low. I will assign these throughout the semester.

### ***Suggested Reading:***

Egri, Lajos. *The Art of Dramatic Writing*. Touchstone. 1988.

Brande, Dorothea. *Becoming a Writer*. Harcourt, Brace & Company. Los Angeles. 1934.

Gilbert, Elizabeth. *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear*. Riverhead Books, New York. 2015.

\*I will occasionally require selected readings from the above texts which I will provide in PDF format. However, I do recommend these books, especially if you believe writing to be your vocation. I'm only not requiring them in order to be efficient in your textbook funds.

## **OTHER REQUIRED TOOLS:**

Celtx subscription

Notebook and pen

## **COURSE CREDIT HOUR INFORMATION**

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3 unit class delivered over 15 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 112.5 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes. The time estimations are provided in the Canvas modules.

## **ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

Grades will be based on the following:

### **Sample Standard Grade Scale Based on Percentages**

| <b>A</b> | <b>B</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>F</b>       |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|
| A 93-100 | B+ 87-89 | C+ 77-79 | D+ 67-69 | F Less than 59 |
| A- 90-92 | B 83-86  | C 73-76  | D 63-66  |                |

|  |          |          |          |  |
|--|----------|----------|----------|--|
|  | B- 80-82 | C- 70-72 | D- 60-62 |  |
|--|----------|----------|----------|--|

## **STATE AUTHORIZATION**

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

## **INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

## **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 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.

## **PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY**

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center ([EAC@pointloma.edu](mailto:EAC@pointloma.edu) or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has

been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan (“AP”) to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student’s responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

### **PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY**

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, 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.

### **SPIRITUAL CARE**

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If students have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact the [Office of Spiritual Development](#).

### **ASSIGNMENTS AT-A-GLANCE**

#### **IN CLASS WRITING EXERCISES / WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (Points vary)**

I will be requiring many small writing assignments throughout the semester as practice, worth a variety of points, including but not limited to journaling, character description/analysis, world building, etc. You will also be writing every single class. I will not force you to share work you’re not comfortable with but I will be noting the sharing as participation so be aware that sharing and receiving feedback is how you learn and get better. Critiques exist to hone your craft. You will learn to give and receive useful constructive feedback.

#### **PLAY CRITIQUE (50 points)**

You will be required to attend a play performance. San Diego is one of the best regional theatre cities in the country so there are plenty of opportunities for you to see a show. If you need help finding a production, I am happy to assist. Using your knowledge from lecture, writing practice, and assignments you will compose a critique of the production, giving me your insight into the writing and the performance of that writing (the actors and director’s interpretation). APA format.

Due November 30th.

**PLAY ANALYSIS GROUP PROJECT** (50 points individual, 50 points group, 100 points total)

You will be required to do a project in pairs (I will assign these pairs). You will be asked to read a specific play and employ an analysis of it similar the analysis we will do in class. You will then present your findings in an interesting and informative way. APA format.

**MIDTERM: ONE ACT PLAY** (100 points)

You will be required to write a one act play (20 pages) for possible use in the One Act Play Festival. Be prepared to give and receive constructive feedback from myself and your peers. Play format.

Due October 26th

**FINAL: ONE ACT PLAY + REFLECTION** (200 points)

You will be required to write a one act play (20 pages) for possible use in the One Act Play Festival. We will be doing staged readings of these plays, performed by your classmates, during our scheduled finals slot. Be prepared to give and receive constructive feedback from myself and your peers. Play format.

Due December 16th

Note: Due to the fact that the number of directing students is (projected to be) smaller than the number of playwriting students, not every play will be chosen for the festival. However, those that do not get selected for the festival will still be performed in a staged reading. No matter what, your work will be read and performed by student actors in the Salomon Theatre. Staged readings are vital and important work. Finishing a play is the first level of achievement that I want us to focus on.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

\*This is not an exhaustive list of our entire schedule for the semester. The bulk of class time and assignments will be spent reading, writing, giving feedback, and discussion. Participation is a key element of this course. I would like you to think of this as more of a Playwriting Workshop.

**September 2**            Introductions / Go over syllabus

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>October 5</b>   | Group Project Presentations: Play Analysis                         |
| <b>October 7</b>   | Group Project Presentations: Play Analysis                         |
| <b>October 26</b>  | First One Act Play due / Readings + Feedback                       |
| <b>November 25</b> | Thanksgiving Day - No Class - Reminder that we live on stolen land |
| <b>November 30</b> | Play Critique Due  |
| <b>December 14</b> | Finals Week - no class   |
| <b>December 16</b> | Final - 4:30 - 7:00 pm<br>One Act Play staged readings             |