

	<b>LJWL(es)</b>
	<b>WRI3022-1 Fiction Writing</b>
<b>3 units</b>	
Fall 2021	

<b>Meeting days:</b> T/R	<b>Instructor title and name:</b> Breeann Kyte Kirby
<b>Meeting times:</b> 9:30-10:45pm	<b>Email:</b> bkirby@pointloma.com
<b>Meeting location:</b> BAC104	<b>Office:</b> BAC122 (by appointment)
<b>Final Exam:</b> T, 14 Dec, 10:30am	<b>Instagram:</b> @naturenarratives
	<b>WhatsApp:</b> <a href="https://chat.whatsapp.com/Ltid6dx0KjuHvnGu30QaIg">https://chat.whatsapp.com/Ltid6dx0KjuHvnGu30QaIg</a>

### 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

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

WRI3022 is an upper division undergraduate creative writing elective you can choose as part of your writing degree (or for fun if you aren't a writing major). This class is a writing class; thus, you will write often and diversely, learning how to go from brainstorming a nascent idea to a final product in addition to practicing providing constructive peer review. As such, you will spend time both in and outside of class reading and writing. Further, you will spend time workshopping each other's drafts which will teach you not only to respond and give outside critique but also to look at yours and others' works with an eye for grammar, narrative clarity, aesthetics, entertainment, and inspiration. Finally, good writers are good readers; though we have two books that will cover the mechanics of writing and the creative life, we will also read various stories that implement these craft techniques.

This course is the short story writing class. Short stories run from 2000 – 7500 words. I chose this format because a) they are good practice for fiction writing techniques over a sustained length and b) they are easier to publish than longer pieces. Your stories for this class will be a minimum of 2000 words and a maximum of 5500 words. That's the sweet spot for publishing.

The PLNU catalog states that WRI3022 is

*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.*

## PROGRAM AND COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

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.

During the course of the semester, we will touch on aspects of all five of these outcomes. The specific **Course Outcomes** are as follows:

1. Gain a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity.
2. Develop creative capacities.
3. Develop in expressing yourself orally or in writing.
4. Develop specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course.

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

You are taking this course because you need a writing elective for your major OR because you want to write fiction.

## REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES

### **Where do I have to spend my money for this class?**

1. Burroway, Janet *Writing Fiction*  
ISBN: 9780226616698
2. Shawl, Nisi and Cynthia Ward *Writing the Other*  
ISBN: 9781933500003
3. Printouts from Canvas as well as your essays—plan accordingly (about \$50-\$75)
4. Various office supplies (lined paper, highlighters, pens, stapler, Scotch tape);
5. (Optional) Notebook/Journal for in-class free writing.

*\*\*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. **You must read this material before class AND either bring in printouts of the pages or a NON CELL PHONE device to read them on. If you do not, I will sweetly ask you to leave class to retrieve the materials (including books on the days we read the above books).** 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. However, any use of those materials outside the course may violate the law. \*\**

## COURSE CREDIT HOUR INFORMATION

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. For example, I expect each contract writing and review to take no more than 30 minutes; thus, I've allotted 1 hour for you to do these two things. To meet accreditation, you are expected to spend 112.5 - 125 hours on this course (~37.5 hours per unit). Below is the breakdown of hours to reach that goal:

Hours	Activity	
15	Reading	
29	Class Participation (including meeting, workshop, and listening to lectures)	
73.5	Assignments	
	Contract	1
	Stories	15
	Revision	3
	One B-project	5
	Critique Letters	40
	One A-project	7
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>	Final	2.5
<b>117.5</b>		

Of course, some of you will take shorter or longer to do a particular activity (and if you are a C-contract you will do fewer things; if an A-contract, more). The goal here isn't to be perfectly accurate, just fair in assessment of how long an activity should take you. I will not be giving partial credit for activities: you either get full credit or not at all (in which case, I will give you an opportunity to try again).

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

### How do I pass this class?

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

### What does that look like?

This is an upper division writing class. As such, you will read some and write A LOT. I have accounted for the reading and writing in the hours you must spend to meet the required 112.5 - 125 hours for this course. Like all of 2020 and 2020+ (aka SP21), this semester will probably be a bit like a rollercoaster. You will get the benefit from this course in proportion to how much you engage with the content. I expect you to read, engage with the texts, having thoughts and constructive feedback about them, and to write both your stories as well as letters about your colleague's stories. This isn't to scare you but to let you know the pacing of the course.

***ALL assignments are due in PAPER copy the day of class unless you are specifically directed otherwise.***

**Since the some of the writing is stuff I made up and others is critique of my classmates' fiction short stories does that mean what I write can be some sort of stream of consciousness string of words I put down five minutes before it was due?**

Nope.

Unless done as an in-class free-writing exercise, anything you submit to me 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.

### **Do I have to have perfect grammar or you will fail me?**

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>1</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 writing 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?**

**Reading Log/Exploratory Journal (10%):** You will carefully read (and annotate) every text assigned for this course, completing a reading log entry of at least ten take-aways for each day's assigned entry. Also, in this journal, you will keep all of your free-writing to the prompts that I will give you each class.

**Portfolio of Writing (43%):** This will be a collection of what you have written over the semester (you will keep it in the pocket folder you had to buy). Keep everything unless told not to. The Portfolio will contain:

Three short stories (15%): Over the course of the semester, you will write three original short stories of 2000 – 5500 words.

\*/\*\*Revised short story (+3%)<sup>2</sup>: This will be a revision of a short story of your choice.

Copies of **your** responses to your peers' stories (25%): These will be 250 – 400 words each. You should have about 36 (three for each classmate) of these by the end of the semester.

Reading Log/Exploratory Journal

**Workshop (15%):** 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, including me (about 14). During workshops, we will thoroughly read, mark up, and discuss your stories. Your workshop grade will be based on your **written critiques (25% in portfolio grade)** as well as active participation and engagement with your peers' works.

**Final Exam (10%):** For your final, you will give a practiced, polished reading of a story from

<sup>1</sup> Note the three typos here.

<sup>2</sup> \* and \*\* denote B- and A-level work, respectively.

your Portfolio. You will be graded on the quality of your introduction to and delivery of the story. Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

**\*B-Projects (each worth 7%):**

**\*Lead Class Discussion:** Some of you may choose to lead the class in discussing one of the fiction stories we will read, connecting to the principles of writing covered in Burroway's or Shawl/Ward's texts. If you do, you will place these notes in your portfolio.

**\*Three Journals for Publication:** Browse the lists of literary journals on [www.pw.org](http://www.pw.org). Visit some journals' websites, read sample stories, and look at their submission guidelines. Choose three journals that seem to fit your own or a classmate's aesthetic. On presentation day, come to class prepared to give a short 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 (if any), submission guidelines, web address, and contact info. This may be a print journal or an online journal.

**\*Present Writing Craft Book:** From a list I've compiled, you will choose, read, and then present to the class another book on the writing craft.

**\*\*A-Projects (each worth 8%):**

**\*\*Daily Pages:** For one month (31 days) you will write three pages or 750 words daily. These are free-writes to clear the "junk" out of your head; you can use it work on ideas, vent, meditate, whatever you want. I will not read them. It is the practice and act of writing that matters. I suggest you try [www.750words.com](http://www.750words.com) as your way to accomplish this assignment (you get one month free). Each week, you will send me a screen shot of the diagnostic page that shows completed days or show me your numbered handwritten pages.

**\*\*Journal Submission:** On the final day of class, you will bring one complete literary journal submission 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 stories as good as they can be.

**\*\*Present on a Published Writer:** Find a published writer whose style is similar to yours. Read some of his/her work. Present to the class the strategies the writer employs that makes his/her work similar to yours, the sort of craft he/she employs, and ways you can "steal" from their work to better your own writing.

Effective learning happens in a dynamic environment. Therefore, you must interact with the instructor and the other students regularly. If you wish to earn your participation 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 class meeting and to share it. Use of cell phones will not be permitted unless you have an academic accommodation OR I give you specific permission. **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 a lot of 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. 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.**

Just like the rest of life, you won't earn partial credit for activities: you either get full credit or not at all (in which case, I will give you an opportunity to try again).

**So what do I need to get for a contracted grade?**

**70-79%: C**

To earn a C grade in this class, you will:

1. Read every assigned text, keeping a reading log/exploratory journal (10%);
2. Contribute to class discussion every class;
3. Miss no more than 3 classes this semester;
4. Come to class on time;
5. Read your peers' work and write a 250-400 word response for each (25%);
6. Actively participate in workshops, leading three (15%);
7. Write three original short stories (2000-5500 words each) (15%);
8. Participate in a reading of your revised work (Final Exam 10%);
9. Submit a portfolio that contains all your written work over the semester.

*\*For a grade of C, you will be an active and positive contributor to our classes, offering a respectful spirit and coming up with insightful ideas and worthwhile feedback.*

I will not accept work that does not meet with the quality expected of a C. If you do not do C-quality work, then I will not accept it. The fluctuation in the percentage allows that there can be variable effort and quality put in at the C level. Thus you can earn a C- or a C+.

### **80-89%: B**

To earn a B grade in this class, you will do **all of the above C assignments (75%), included a revised short story in your portfolio (3%),** as well as **choose one of the assignments (7%)** below.

- B1.** Lead class discussion on one of the short stories or one of the craft books we are reading as a class;
- B2.** Present a list of 3 journals/magazines that would be fitting for you to publish one of your stories in, providing a sheet for the class that lists submission requirements for each publication;
- B3.** Choose one of the craft books below (or propose one to me), read it, and present on it in class.

*Bird by Bird* Anne Lamott  
*On Writing* Steven King  
*The War of Art* Steven Pressfield  
*The Writing Life* Annie Dillard  
*Walking on Water* Madeleine L'Engle  
*How to Write Bestselling Fiction* Dean Koontz  
*On Writing Well* William Zinsser  
*Writing Down the Bones* Natalie Goldberg  
*Telling True Stories* Mark Kramer  
*The New New Journalism* Robert Boynton  
*The Writer's Journey* Christopher Vogler  
*Burning Down the House* Charles Baxter  
*The Art of Fiction* John Gardner  
*On Becoming a Novelist* John Gardner  
*The Story Grid* Shawn Coyne

*\*For a grade of B, you will be an active and positive contributor to our classes, offering a respectful spirit and coming up with insightful ideas and worthwhile feedback.*

I will not accept work that does not meet with the quality expected of a B. If you do not do B-quality work, then I will not accept it. The fluctuation in the percentage allows that there can be variable effort and quality put in at the B level. Thus you can earn a B- or a B+.

### **90-100%: A**

To earn an A grade in this class you will **do all of the C assignments (75%), included a revised short story in your portfolio (3%), two B assignments (14%), and one of the A assignments (8%)** below:

- A1.** Write 750 words a day for a month (30 days);
- A2.** Actually submit one of your short stories to a journal or a contest;
- A3.** Find a published writer who writes similarly to you. Read some of his/her work. Present to the class the things this writer does that makes his/her work similar to yours, what sort of craft does he/she employ, and ways you can “steal” from his/her methods to make your writing better.

*\*For a grade of A, you will be an active and positive contributor to our classes, offering a respectful spirit and coming up with insightful ideas and worthwhile feedback.*

I will not accept work that does not meet with the quality expected of an A. If you do not do A-quality work, then I will not accept it. The fluctuation in the percentage allows that there can be variable effort and quality put in at the A level. Thus you can earn an A- or an A (sorry there are no A+s, but you are all A+ in my heart).

**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.

**Grades will be based on the following:**

<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 times they are due as indicated on Canvas or the course schedule. All readings should be done by the day listed. 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.

## PLNU COVID POLICY

*Our updated masking policy effective August 4, 2021:*

Individuals on a Point Loma campus, **regardless of vaccination status, must be masked indoors.**

Individuals on a Point Loma campus who are **unvaccinated should remain masked outdoors** when 6 feet of distance cannot be maintained.

Individuals on a Point Loma campus who are **vaccinated may remain unmasked outdoors.**

Even if you aren't masking and distancing elsewhere, I'm asking you to respect these requirements while you are in the classroom or doing other course-related activities. If you don't

want to wear a mask, I respect that choice, but I will ask you to leave our gathering which will count as an absence for the day.

### **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](#).

### **USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

In order to be successful, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [Technology and System Requirements](#) information.

Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

## ASSIGNMENTS AT-A-GLANCE

## Schedule

(\*Subject to Change as needed to facilitate course goals\*)<sup>3</sup>:

Readings and assignments are due on the date listed.

*WF* denotes readings from *Writing Fiction*.

*WtO* denotes readings from *Writing the Other*

(Canvas) denotes readings can be found on Canvas in PAGES section

## Week 1

2 September Syllabus/Getting to Know You

## Week 2

7 September *WF* CH 1 – Whatever Works: 1 - 21

*WF* CH 9 – Play It Again: 201 - 211

Le Guin *Steering the Craft* “Appendix: The Peer Group Workshop”: 127– 135  
(Canvas)

9 September Short Story Handout

*WF* CH 2 – Seeing is Believing: 22 - 43

## Week 3

14 September *WF* CH 3 – Building Character: 44 – 74

Bisson “They’re Made Out of Meat” (Canvas)

16 September *WtO*: 1 – 46

**DUE:** Short Story 1

## Week 4

21 September Workshop #1, Group 1

23 September Workshop #1, Group 2

## Week 5

28 September Workshop #1, Group 3

30 September Workshop #1, Group 4

## Week 6

5 October *WtO*: 47 – 66; 85 - 97

7 October *WF* CH 4 – The Flesh Made Word: 75 - 100

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

**Week 7**

<b>12 October</b>	<i>WF</i> CH 5 – Long Ago and Far Away: 101 - 123 Fowler “Pelican Bar” (Canvas)
<b>14 October</b>	<i>WF</i> CH 6 – The Tower and the Net: 124 - 152 <b>DUE:</b> Proposal of A-/B-projects

**Week 8**

<b>19 October</b>	Chiang “Story of Your Life” (Canvas)
<b>21 October</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b> <b>DUE:</b> Short Story 2 <b>DUE:</b> PARTICIPATION Mid-Course Survey

**Week 9**

<b>26 October</b>	Workshop #2, Group 1
<b>28 October</b>	Workshop #2, Group 2

**Week 10**

<b>2 November</b>	Workshop #2, Group 3
<b>4 November</b>	Workshop #2, Group 4

**Week 11**

<b>9 November</b>	<i>WF</i> CH 7 – Call Me Ishmael: 153 - 179 Yu “The Man Who Became Himself” (Canvas)
<b>11 November</b>	<i>WF</i> CH 8 – Is and Is Not: 180 – 200

**Week 12**

<b>16 November</b>	Presentations for A/B-Projects
<b>18 November</b>	Presentations for A/B-Projects <b>DUE:</b> Short Story 3

**Week 13 – Thanksgiving Break**

<b>23 November</b>	<i>WF</i> CH 9 – Play It Again: 211 - 223
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**Week 14**

<b>30 November</b>	Workshop #3, Group 1
<b>2 December</b>	Workshop #3, Group 2

**Week 15**

<b>7 December</b>	Workshop #3, Group 3
<b>9 December</b>	Workshop #3, Group 4 <b>DUE:</b> PARTICIPATION Course Evaluation

**FINALS WEEK**

<b>14 December</b>	<b>FINAL</b> 10:30 – 1pm <b>DUE:</b> Portfolio of Work
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