

DESERT INSTITUTE

Spring Session 2021

at Joshua Tree National Park

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The Power of Space (Making) and Place: Finding and Writing your Inner Desert during the Pandemic

Information

Date/ Time: Thursday, April 8, Thursday, April 15, Thursday, April 22, Thursday, April 29 and May 6, (optional shared reading). All class dates meet from 4 pm – 6 pm PST.

Meet at: Zoom, upon registration you will receive the zoom meeting login

Instructor: Ruth Nolan, M.F.A., M.A., Author and Professor of English and Creative Writing, College of the Desert

Overview

The pandemic has made us all thirst for magical desert places more than ever. Whether you've been able to get to Joshua Tree National Park or not during this challenging time, you can join Ruth Nolan's "Writing Your Inner Desert" online workshop to bring you there to write and connect with the Mojave Desert's eco-tones as our touchstone for connecting and finding catharsis through the power of place and word. This workshop will use visual, thematic other prompts inspired by the Park's stunning vistas to help participants jump-start their writing, with guidance on writing in narrative, journaling, fictional and simple poetic forms. There will also be guided feedback for participants' writing generated during the workshop, and participants will be encouraged continue (optionally) on revising drafts of work started in the workshop for larger projects/publication. Instructor will provide resources for interested in publishing their writing, along with resource information on making connections with established literary communities in the Joshua Tree National Park region.

This workshop session will be held in five, 2-hour sessions held over a ten-week period on alternate Thursday afternoons from 4-6 PM PST, for a total of ten hours, and will culminate in a virtual Zoom reading event at the end of the series. (Optional for participants.)

Goals - interpretation of Joshua Tree National Park geography, resources, history, cultures, flora/fauna, etc through a broad range of writing prompts and excerpted passages from established desert literature, through each participants writing and, optionally, sharing with the group for (optionally, as requested) guided feedback from instructor and peers. For those who are included to polish their works generated in the workshop, guidelines with ideas for submitting works (i.e., local desert publications) and involvement with literary community in the area (i.e., reading series, bookstores) will be provided by instructor.

Itinerary

Thursday, April 8 4 pm – 6 pm, PST	Topics Desert Campfire Stories / Storytelling
Thursday, April 15 4 pm – 6 pm, PST	Topics Ecotones of the Mojave / Journaling
Thursday, April 22 4 pm – 6 pm, PST	Topics Desert Oases and Wilderness Corridors / Poetry
Thursday, April 29 4 pm – 6 pm, PST	Topics A Transitional Desert / Narration and Fiction
Thursday, May 6 4 pm – 6 pm, PST	Topics Standing in the Magic Desert Circle / Reading & Sharing

Instructor Biography

Ruth Nolan, M.F.A., M.A., Professor of English and Creative Writing at college of the Desert and editor of is editor of critically-acclaimed *No Place for a Puritan: the Literature of California* (Heyday.) She grew up in a remote part of the Mojave Desert town has worked as a wildland firefighter for the Bureau of Land Management California Desert District and the U.S. Forest Service. She has taught creative writing and literature workshops for the Desert Institute for over 10 years and is co-founder of the Inlandia Institute community writing workshop. She writes about California desert wildfire, environmental issues, indigenous places and culture, and her life living in the Mojave and Coachella Valley deserts. Her writing has been published in *Boom, California; KCET L.A.; Desert Report; News from Native California; McSweeney's; Desert Oracle; Desert Magazine / USA Today; Rattling Wall; Women's Studies Quarterly; Inlandia Literary Journeys* and has been supported by grants from California Humanities, California Writers Residency, Breadloaf, Aspen Words and Vermont Studio. She is curator of the ongoing humanities project, *Fire On the Mojave: Stories from the Deserts and Mountains of Inland Southern California*, and is serving as the inaugural Mojave Desert Literary Laureate (2021-23.)