



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

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WRITE LIKE THE DESERT

FIELD WORKSHOP / FALL 2023

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

During this workshop, we will turn to the lure and lore of the Mojave Desert to engage our senses and imaginations as we generate creative writing in simple prose and poetic forms and evoke this uniquely punctuated landscape in patterned and sculpted works using our own words and ecotones. Participants will take an easy walk along the Indian Cove nature trail to gather sensory input to stimulate their writing, and will draw guidance from instructor-led prompts, feedback and sharing activities, and excerpts from some of the classics of Mojave Desert literature. Picnic benches will be available to sit and write at, but participants are encouraged to bring their own comfortable camping chairs.

MEETING LOCATION

[Indian Cove Campground, Group Campsite #3](#), 68917 Indian Cove Circle, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

DATE and TIME

October 29th, 1-5p

Please arrive on time; we start classes promptly, and in the case of hikes or other classes on the go, we cannot wait for students who arrive late.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: EASY

There will be an easy walk along maintained trails and in desert washes, no more than two miles, with little or no elevation gain. Please contact us if you have questions about accommodations or your ability to participate.

EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

None

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group
- A handout packet including excerpts of desert literature and a reading bibliography

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Meals
- Lodging
- Transportation
- Writing supplies such as pen and paper

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR: Ruth Nolan

Ruth Nolan lives in the Mojave Desert and is an author and professor of creative writing at College of the Desert. She has curated writing workshops for Desert Institute since 2008. Her desert-centric writing has been published in Boom: California; McSweeney's; KCET Tending Nature and Artbound L.A.; Joshua Tree: Where Two Deserts Meet; Campfire Books Volume II Stories Vol. 2: Voices from America's National Parks and Trails and Writing the Golden State: The New Literary Terrain of California. A former wildland firefighter for the B.L.M. CA Desert District, she is editor of "No Place for a Puritan: the Literature of California's Deserts (Heyday Books) and curator of the humanities project "Fire on the Mojave: Stories from the Deserts and Mountains of Southern California."

PROGRAM AGENDA

After a brief round of introductions, we'll jump start our writing activities in response to writing prompts, and review Mojave Desert biologist Dr. Edmund Jaeger's compact essay "The Magic Circle" before we indulge our senses on a short hike through the stunning boulders of the campground and along the Indian Cove Nature trail. We'll return to our private picnic area to write and share from each others' written works.

SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

There is no cell service in the park! Please make sure you check the weather ahead of time and dress accordingly. **All participants must complete the [health questionnaire and liability waiver](#) at least one day ahead of the program start date.**

WHAT TO BRING

The essentials for all field courses

- Water, between 3 and 4 liters per person for a full day outing
- Food and snacks, easily packed and eaten in the field, for the duration of your course
- Close-toed athletic shoes or hiking boots; no sandals, not even hiking sandals!
- Sun protection: hat, sunglasses, sunscreen; light-colored long-sleeved shirts are recommended and very effective on hot days
- Warm layers for cooler mornings/evenings (it can be surprisingly cold!)
- Backpack to carry food, water, and any personal items you need for the day
- Notebook and pencil are always good to have

Required

- Pen or pencil
- Notebook to write in
- Snacks or easily packed foods to eat at picnic tables
- Outdoor camping/folding chair or blanket if you prefer to sit on ground

Recommended

- Personal umbrella for shade

FAQ

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I AM RUNNING LATE?

Please call our main line: 760-819-4714 and if no one answers, please call the Desert Institute coordinator, Benny Lopez: 949-241-9693.

For classes meeting in the park, please take into consideration the time it will take to go through the entrance gate—on weekends after 9am, you may wait up to 45 minutes! (15-20 minutes is typical.) For afternoon activities, you will also want to allot time to park, as parking lots tend to be congested between 10am and 4p in the busy season. **There is no cell service in the park**, so please plan accordingly!

WHAT IF I NEED TO CANCEL?

Desert Institute will provide a full refund if we are notified 14 days in advance. If we are notified less than 14 days in advance, we are unable to process refunds for any reason. (But we would like you to notify us if you are unable to attend.)

DOES DESERT INSTITUTE CANCEL ACTIVITIES FOR WEATHER OR LOW ENROLLMENT?

Desert Institute runs classes rain or shine, with the exception of astrophotography classes, which require mostly clear skies in order to be successful. If we do not meet our minimum of 4 registered participants for any given activity, we will cancel the activity with 48+ hours notice. We recommend that you purchase travel insurance, as we are unable to reimburse for expenses you incur due to a canceled class, such as airfare and hotel.

ARE THERE ANY THINGS I NEED TO DO TO PREPARE?

All participants must return the completed [health questionnaire and signed waiver](#) before the day of their activity. **Failure to do so will cancel your registration.** If your course enters Joshua Tree National Park, you must **download or print your park pass** ahead of the class, or you will pay the entrance fee at the gate, which is currently \$35 per vehicle.

CAN I BRING MY KIDS? MY SPOUSE? PETS?

Only registered participants may attend Desert Institute activities unless noted in the activity description. If this is a kid-friendly activity, please make sure your child(ren) meets the age requirements. As much as we love our pets, we don't allow them in the field with any of our activities.