



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

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55922 Twentynine Palms Highway,
Yucca Valley, 92284

WRITE LIKE THE DESERT

FIELD CLASS / SPRING 2024 / INSTRUCTOR: RUTH NOLAN

MARCH 3, 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

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.

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.

MEETING LOCATION

[Indian Cove Campground, Group Campsite #7](#), 68917 Indian Cove Circle, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

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.

REQUIRED PREPARATION*

Waiver: All participants must complete the [participation waiver](#) at least 24 hours before a class begins. *Failure to do so may forfeit your right to participate.*

Park Pass (\$30 per vehicle): For classes inside Joshua Tree National Park, participants are now required to purchase a [park pass](#). You can purchase a park pass [online](#), or pay at a park entrance. If you have an existing pass you may use that at the entrance!

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 your ability to participate.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Admission to Joshua Tree National Park
- Meals, Lodging, or Transportation
- Writing supplies such as pen and paper

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 (please leave no trace)
- 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

Required for this course:

- 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 for this course (but not required):

- Personal umbrella for shade

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR

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."

SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

There is no cell service in the park! Please allow ample time to arrive at the meeting location; park entrances may be very busy on weekends (see FAQs). Please make sure you check weather conditions and dress accordingly.



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FAQ+ _

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I AM RUNNING LATE?

Desert Institute Manager Benny Erdahl: **949-241-9693**
or Education Director Dr. Justin Lenzi: **760-819-4714**

For classes meeting inside the park, it can take up to 45 minutes to go through an entrance gate on weekends after 9am (though 15-20 minutes is typical). Please 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***, please plan accordingly.

WHAT IF I NEED TO CANCEL?

Desert Institute will provide a full refund if we are notified more than 14 days in advance. We are unable to process refunds for *any* cancellations less than 14 days in advance.

DOES DESERT INSTITUTE CANCEL ACTIVITIES FOR WEATHER OR LOW ENROLLMENT?

If we do not meet our minimum of 6 registered participants for any given activity, we will likely cancel the activity with at least 48+ hours notice.

Desert Institute runs classes rain or shine, with the exception of astrophotography classes, which require mostly clear skies in order to be successful.

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.

WHAT IF I FORGOT SOMETHING I NEED?

Our visitor centers and park stores are stocked with amazing essentials for your adventure. Preview or purchase items from our [online shop](#); we carry [hats](#), [shirts](#), bandanas, water bottles, notebooks, [maps](#), [books](#). And more!

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) are registered and meet the age requirements.

As much as we love pets, we don't allow them in the field with any of our activities.

