



John Steinbeck, Social Critic and Ecologist - Summer Institute for 4th-12th Grade Teachers

A National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute exploring Steinbeck's sense of place, his California fiction and prose, as well as his environmental, scientific and political sensibilities.

Held on the Monterey Peninsula, July 10 - July 30, 2016

Dear Colleague,

John Steinbeck, author of more than thirty books, winner of the Pulitzer Prize (in 1940, for *The Grapes of Wrath*), Nobel Prize for Literature (1962) and United States Medal of Freedom (1964), is perhaps best known as a writer who laid bare the suffering of the worker during the 1930s in *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. He is also a regional writer in the best sense, for his passionate attachment to place and to California's history and diverse peoples informs much of his finest work, from early short stories to the compelling *East of Eden* (1952). Those works and others have impacted readers around the world. Throughout his long career as social critic, he was unafraid to question "the tomorrow of my people," yet optimistic enough to add, "my questioning is compounded of some fear, more hope, and great confidence." Equally important, Steinbeck's sense of place and history was enriched by his interest in science. His friendship with marine biologist Edward F. Ricketts from 1930-1948 had a deep and lasting impact on his work, evident in the book that was his own favorite, *Sea of Cortez* (1941). Steinbeck's ecological and scientific sensibilities suffuse all of his works, fiction and nonfiction.

Steinbeck remains a significant and ever-relevant American author because his vision was empathetic and visionary, grounded in the lives of ordinary people, and because he conveyed a holistic sense of interconnections of all life. He wanted his readers to "participate" in each book, to "understand"; both are words he used again and again. He is a writer who delineated with great clarity the contours of his region; a writer who critiqued his country and defended democratic freedoms; a writer who was convinced that humans must recognize the interconnectedness of all species.

This National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute will explore Steinbeck's diverse and intersecting visions and consider why his work deserves complex consideration through discussions focused on his regional ties as well as his ecological, political, and social visions. During this three-week Institute based on the Monterey Peninsula, we will reconsider key works of this iconic American writer and address how Steinbeck's literature speaks across disciplines – historical, political, and scientific. The first part of the Institute focuses on Steinbeck and the land, and the second examines Steinbeck and the sea, with particular emphasis on his interest in marine ecology. During this Institute, NEH Summer Scholars will study, discuss, reflect on and explore "Steinbeck Country" – Salinas, Monterey Big Sur and the Pacific Ocean.

Content

The Steinbeck Institute will begin late afternoon on Sunday, July 10, and end at 10:00 pm on July 29 after the final banquet and presentation of projects generated during the Institute. Throughout the Institute, NEH Summer Scholars will be immersed in the social history and ecological awareness that inform Steinbeck's California fiction: local agricultural and fishing industries, the California mission legacy, migrant histories that shaped regional diversity, and the interest in marine studies that he and Ricketts shared. Steinbeck scholars as well as local historians and biologists will lead workshops that focus on the regional influences and historical and ecological contexts for several of his major novels. Central to a full appreciation of his work will be on-site visits to Steinbeck locales: Salinas and the Salinas Valley, the Monterey Peninsula and the Big Sur coast. Field trips will include the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, the Red Pony Ranch, coastal redwoods of Big Sur, and tide pooling at Hopkins Marine Station (where Steinbeck himself took classes in marine biology in 1923). An agricultural tour of working fields in the Salinas Valley will inform NEH Summer Scholars about crop diversity, water use, and labor and housing issues. We will also spend one day on Monterey Bay with local marine biologists to explore marine life from plankton to great whales as well as local maritime and fishing histories.

The first week examines Steinbeck as a fiction writer and social historian, focusing on short stories in *The Long Valley* and his novels *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. At the beginning of the second week, the group turns to Steinbeck's epic treatment of the Salinas Valley, *East of Eden*. Midway through that week the focus shifts to Steinbeck and the sea with consideration of *Cannery Row*. The final week is dedicated to *Sea of Cortez* and the relationship of this work to marine ecology and to Steinbeck's holistic philosophy of man and nature.

An important goal throughout the Institute will be integration of Steinbeck's environmental vision with his novels, and we will consider his work in light of representative selections from Aldo Leopold, Gary Snyder, Robinson Jeffers and Rachel Carson. (Steinbeck told his wife Elaine that *Silent Spring* was the one book he wished he had written.) In these discussions we will move beyond a reading of Steinbeck as regional writer and social historian of the 1930s to consider how his work resonates with contemporary issues, particularly those concerning humans and their environment.

A variety of approaches to teaching will be modeled during the Institute. Two sessions will be devoted to integrating performance and performance theory to facilitate classroom interpretation of texts. Another session will be given by a professor of creative writing, who will examine the structure of Steinbeck's short stories and how they reveal the author's approach to writing fiction. Other workshops will consider the importance of voice – exploring the varied regional and ethnic voices that Steinbeck sought to include in his novels and analyzing how these voices continue to speak to larger issues in American society. In the second half of the Institute, we will examine ways in which field studies and natural history can enrich the reading of many of Steinbeck's works.

The Program Directors and teacher facilitators will also meet with NEH Summer Scholars in workshops and one-on-one to assist with adapting new materials and approaches for their classrooms. Scholars will develop a lesson-plan project and contribute their lesson plans and related curricular materials to the Steinbeck Institute website (<http://www.steinbeckinstitute.org/>) that hosts scholarly resources, an image gallery, and curriculum materials developed by previous NEH Summer Institutes.

Core Faculty

Co-Director Susan Shillinglaw is a Professor of English at San Jose State University and Director of the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas. William Gilly is a Professor of Biology at Stanford University and has participated in all previous Steinbeck Institutes. They have co-taught courses at Stanford University that are designed to bridge humanities and science – “Holistic Biology,” an intensive field course, and “Views of a Changing Sea: Literature and Science,” an introductory seminar intended to enhance environmental awareness in freshmen through literature, both scientific and poetic. They frequently lecture together on Steinbeck, Ricketts, and the *Sea of Cortez*, and a relevant interview with both scholars is posted on the NEH EDSITEment website (<http://edsitement.neh.gov/feature/tracking-john-steinbeck-grapes-wrath>).

Dr. Susan Shillinglaw will give presentations on Steinbeck as well as conduct local field trips. A noted Steinbeck scholar, she has published several articles on the author and has edited Steinbeck’s journalism (*America and Americans and Selected Nonfiction*) and collections of essays. She has also written introductions to Penguin editions of *Cannery Row*, *Of Mice and Men*, *A Russian Journal*, *The Winter of Our Discontent* and *The Portable Steinbeck* (2012). She is the author of *A Journey Into Steinbeck’s California* (2006; 2011) and *On Reading The Grapes of Wrath* (Penguin 2014); copies of both books will be sent to participants. She also wrote a biography of Steinbeck’s first marriage, *Carol and John Steinbeck: Portrait of a Marriage* (University of Nevada Press, 2013). Currently, Dr. Shillinglaw is co-editing a Steinbeck encyclopedia of cultural contexts, *All Things Steinbeck*.

Dr. William Gilly is based at Hopkins Marine Station in Pacific Grove. He was Director and Chief Scientist for the 2004 retracing of Steinbeck and Ricketts’s Sea of Cortez trip. In addition to an accomplished scientific career with numerous peer-reviewed publications, he has engaged in many outreach projects involving print, television, radio and web media. Gilly is working with educational programs at all levels through Squids4Kids, a nation-wide program he started in 2008. Squids4Kids regularly visits California K-12 classrooms and participates in family science-events, including the National Science and Engineering Festival in Washington DC. His current research focuses on the ecology, behavior and physiology of the Humboldt squid and on impacts of decreasing oxygen in marine systems, including the Sea of Cortez and Monterey Bay. He will lead discussions and workshops on *Sea of Cortez* and its relationship to other of Steinbeck’s works and direct the field work on intertidal ecology and oceanic marine life.

Additional guest faculty (and their primary contribution) will include:

- Dr. Robert DeMott, Professor of English, Ohio University: author of *Steinbeck’s Typewriter: Essays on His Art* and editor of *Working Days: The Journals of The Grapes of Wrath* as well as the Steinbeck titles for the Library of America (*The Grapes of Wrath*)
- Dr. Chris Fink, Professor of English, Beloit College: a contributing editor for *Steinbeck Studies* and author of a collection of short fiction, *Farmer’s Almanac* (Steinbeck’s short stories)
- Dr. Matthew Spangler, Professor of Communication Studies, San Jose State University: author and director of over thirty adaptations of literature for the stage (demonstration and consideration of pedagogy performance)
- Anthony Newfield: actor and author of “Steinbeck and the Land,” a presentation he has given in New York City and in California (*Of Mice and Men* --film, play and musical)

- Dr. Scot Guenter, Professor of Humanities, San Jose State University: American Studies teacher (cultural contexts of *East of Eden* - novel and film)
- Dr. Persis Karim, Professor of Literature and Creative Writing, San Jose State University: author and editor of [*Tremors: New Fiction by Iranian American Writers*](#) (2013) and [*Let Me Tell You Where I've Been: New Writing by Women of the Iranian Diaspora*](#) (2006) (working class voices in *The Grapes of Wrath*)
- Dr. Mary Adler, Professor of English at California State University, Channel Islands: secondary education specialist (heteroglossia in *The Grapes of Wrath*)
- Dr. Craig Strang, Associate Director, Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California, Berkeley: Director and Principal Investigator of the NSF-funded [Center for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence - California](#) which led the development of the Communicating Ocean Sciences college courses and professional learning network for informal educators (exploration of the rocky intertidal habitat at Hopkins Marine Station)
- Dr. Steve Palumbi, Professor of Biology, Stanford University: Director of Hopkins Marine Station and co-author of *The Death and Life of Monterey Bay: A Story of Revival* (ecological history of Monterey Bay)
- Pete Barraza, Santa Monica High School: teacher facilitator (teaching California history in secondary schools, pop culture and Steinbeck, teaching *Cannery Row*)
- Additional presenters on California history, marine ecology, and Steinbeck studies will assist with workshops, discussions and field trips.

Expectations of NEH Summer Scholars

NEH Summer Scholars in the Steinbeck Institute should expect an intensive but rewarding experience. Institute sessions will include lectures, discussions, small group workshops, field studies and participatory performance – each providing a different methodology for understanding and interacting with the readings to be covered. Summer Scholars will be expected to attend and participate in all scheduled events.

Workshops are scheduled Monday through Friday, with weekends free until Sunday evening, when we gather for group discussions. Several weekday evenings are set aside for film showings, informal meals, and other group activities. The weekly schedule will fluctuate somewhat to provide free time during the afternoon on days with scheduled evening sessions. NEH Summer Scholars will be provided with composition books for documenting their thoughts and questions in the course of workshop sessions as well as during their free time.

Since time at the Institute will be filled with discussion and activities, participating Summer Scholars are expected to have read the following major works before they arrive: *Of Mice and Men*, *The Long Valley*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Log from the Sea of Cortez*, *Cannery Row* and *East of Eden*. In addition, there will be a number of short reading assignments during the Institute. Each NEH summer scholar will be given a flash drive containing these assignments and other relevant materials..

NEH Summer Scholars will receive support in translating ideas, content, and approaches from workshops into an appropriate format to engage students. Each participant will create a project. This project will include lesson plans that will be presented in outline at the closing session, and the final project must be submitted within one month after conclusion of the Institute. All final lesson plans will be posted on the Institute website.

A letter will be sent to all NEH Summer Scholars after acceptance detailing specific readings and a calendar of presentation topics.

Applicants' Qualifications

Applicants to NEH Summer Institutes must be practicing full-time (or the equivalent) teachers or full-time graduate students intending to pursue a career in secondary education (three places are available for graduate students). We welcome applications from a variety of disciplines, including natural and social sciences. Previous experience teaching Steinbeck or American literature is not required, but applicants must wish to incorporate knowledge of Steinbeck into their professional lives in some meaningful way.

Academic resources

NEH Summer Scholars will be able to use the library at Hopkins Marine Station, where Steinbeck texts will be housed. In addition, the Directors will have available key secondary texts.

The Olympia Lodge provides wireless internet access in each room; participants are strongly encouraged to bring laptops.

Housing

NEH Summer Scholars will be housed at the Olympia Lodge at 1140 Lighthouse Avenue in Pacific Grove, 1.5 miles from the location of the Institute at Hopkins Marine Station near Cannery Row. The rate for a large double room is \$89.00 + tax per night with continental breakfast included (room cost to be shared, so each NEH scholar would pay approximately \$50 a night for the double room). A few singles will also be available for this same price, \$89.00.

The Olympia Lodge is located a block from the Pacific Ocean and about a mile from downtown Pacific Grove, where Steinbeck lived from 1930-36 (and where his family had a summer home when he was growing up). Cannery Row is under 2 miles from the Lodge, and downtown Monterey about 3 miles. Buses go to Carmel and to Big Sur. The Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail makes all locations easily accessible and gives NEH Summer Scholars opportunity to be within walking and biking distance of numerous Steinbeck sites and points of interest on a daily basis. Many previous NEH scholars have rented bikes for the duration of the Institute. Daily transportation by van will also be provided between Olympia Lodge and Hopkins Marine Station (once in the morning and once in the evening).

Stipends

NEH Summer Scholars participating in a three-week Institute are awarded a \$2700 stipend, which is meant to help cover travel, housing, and food costs. Half of the stipend will be given to participants when they arrive, and the remaining amount will be provided near the end of the project. In order to be eligible for the full amount of the stipend, NEH Summer Scholars must attend all required events and activities for the duration of the Institute.

Continuing Education Credit (CEUs) for NEH Summer Scholars

Optional continuing education units (CEUs are not equivalent to college course credit, however) can be earned for 1-6 units at \$60.00 per unit. These units have been arranged with San Jose State University. Additional work beyond attendance and full participation during the Institute is not required to earn CEU credit from San Jose State.

Application Procedures and Deadlines

Your completed application should be postmarked no later than March 1, 2016 and should be addressed to: William Gilly and Susan Shillinglaw, Hopkins Marine Station, 120 Ocean View Boulevard, Pacific Grove, CA 93950. Please send three copies of your complete application. If you have any questions, please write Eric Mora at steinbecknehinstitute@gmail.com.

Please review the instructions contained in “Participant Application Cover Sheet” at <https://securegrants.neh.gov/education/participants/>. An application cover sheet must be completed and submitted online *and* printed and enclosed with the application. In addition, please include:

- A resume of educational and professional background, noting specific courses taught in American history/literature/culture or biology courses. Please note other subjects you’ve taught related to the theme of this Summer Institute.
- An essay (no more than 4 double spaced pages) describing your reasons for applying – both academic and personal. The essay is an important part of the application and should address qualifications, goals for the project – including any individual research and writing projects – and the relation of the study to teaching duties and plans.
- Letters from two references.

All applications will be reviewed by the two Co-Directors and a local high-school teacher.

We look forward to many productive discussions, stimulated and enriched by the historical and contemporary backdrop of the Monterey Peninsula. Our goal is to invite NEH Summer Scholars into a conversation that examines connections, the ways in which literature, history, geography, science, and social awareness intersect. This is the broad vision that Steinbeck embraced. We hope each NEH Summer Scholar will come away with a richer appreciation of the ways that Steinbeck’s sense of place – both local and national – informs his social, historical and ecological vision of America. We trust that each NEH Summer Scholar will take ideas and knowledge back to students for further discussion and exploration. Please join us!

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Susan Shillinglaw



Dr. William Gilly

Co-Directors, NEH Steinbeck Summer Institute 2016