



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

John Steinbeck, Social Critic and Ecologist

A National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for 4th-12th grade Teachers that will explore 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 3 through July 23, 2022

Overview:

John Steinbeck, author of more than thirty books, winner of the Pulitzer Prize (1940), the Nobel Prize for Literature (1962) and the United States Medal of Freedom (1964), is perhaps best known as a writer who laid bare the suffering of workers and migrants during the 1930s in *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939). Certainly he remains known as one of the most important social-protest novelists of the 20th century, but he was also an ecological visionary and an incisive commentator on American values and ideals throughout his long career—a writer who spent most of his career exploring what “the common good” really meant to fellow Americans. While he delineated with great clarity the contours of his region, he also critiqued his country and defended its democratic freedoms -- and was convinced that humans must also recognize and value their relationships to all other species. Steinbeck’s sense of place and social engagement was enriched by a long-standing 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 personal favorite, *Sea of Cortez* (1941).

Steinbeck’s moral and ecological sensibilities are deeply intertwined and suffuse all of his works, fiction and nonfiction. This Institute is dedicated to integrating the study of humanities and sciences, the vision that Steinbeck embraced throughout his career.

Through lectures, group discussions, site visits and field work, we will explore the continuing relevance of his sense of place, his social/political vision, and his ecological and scientific perspective. This Summer Institute’s holistic approach to Steinbeck’s work will help bridge the divides between humanities and sciences, between literary analysis and historical contexts, between historical and contemporary perspectives, and between fiction and nonfiction.

Content

The three-week 2022 Steinbeck Institute will held at [Hopkins Marine Station](#) of Stanford University in Pacific Grove, CA. It will begin with a 5:30 PM banquet on Sunday, July 3, and end at 10:00 pm on Friday, July 22, after a final dinner and presentation of preliminary projects generated during the Institute. The first half of the Institute will primarily consider Steinbeck’s “California” fiction, including

the core texts to be considered--*The Long Valley* (1938), *Of Mice and Men*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *East of Eden* (1952). The second part of the institute examines Steinbeck's "Sea" work, including *Sea of Cortez* and *Cannery Row* (1945). During this part we will also consider Steinbeck's work in light of selections from Aldo Leopold, Robinson Jeffers and Rachel Carson. Here Steinbeck's scientific sensibilities emerge in considering historical and contemporary social and environmental issues, including habitat degradation, destructive fishing practices and climate change.

Throughout the Institute, Summer Scholars will develop an increased appreciation for the links between the novels and scientific ideas and how the two bodies of work inform each other. As part of this process, we will pursue the social history and ecological awareness that are at the core of Steinbeck's writing: local agricultural and fishing industries, the California mission legacy, migrant histories that shaped regional diversity, and the interest in marine studies shared with Ricketts. Steinbeck scholars as well as historians and biologists will lead workshops that focus on the regional influences and historical and ecological contexts for several of his major novels. We will make on-site visits to the [National Steinbeck Center](#) in Salinas, the Red Pony Ranch, [coastal redwoods of Big Sur](#), Cannery Row and the [Ed Ricketts lab](#), the [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) and [Monterey Bay tide pools](#). An agricultural tour of working fields in the [Salinas Valley](#) will inform 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 microscopic plankton to great whales as well as local maritime and fishing histories.

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 and ethnicity – exploring both the varied regional voices that Steinbeck sought to include in his novels (ethnic as well as marginalized workers, southwestern migrants as well as the broad empathy seen in Casy, Doc and Slim) as well as 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 much of Steinbeck's work, including fiction. And we will look at Steinbeck's work in the context of other writers concerned with ecology. *The Log from Sea of Cortez* is a core text in the latter part of the Institute.

The Program Directors, Assistant Brett Navin, and participating facilitators will also meet with Summer Scholars in small-group sessions 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](#) that hosts scholarly resources, an image gallery, and curriculum materials developed by previous NEH-supported Summer Institutes on John Steinbeck.

Core Faculty

Co-Director Dr. **Susan Shillinglaw** is a Professor of English at San Jose State University and former Director of the Center for Steinbeck Studies at SJSU. 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. Both are Founding Board Members of the [Western Flyer Foundation](#), an organization dedicated to restoring the vessel that Steinbeck and Ricketts took to the Sea of Cortez in 1940 and returning it to Monterey to serve as an ocean-education platform.

A noted Steinbeck scholar, Dr. Shillinglaw 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; 2019) 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)

Dr. William Gilly is a Professor of Biology at Stanford University, based at Hopkins Marine Station. He was Director and Chief Scientist of the [Sea of Cortez Exploration and Education Project](#) in 2004 that retraced Steinbeck and Ricketts’s 1940 trip. In addition to a scientific career with numerous peer-reviewed publications, he has engaged in many outreach projects involving print, television, radio and web media. The [Squids4Kids](#) program, which he started in 2008, brings issues of ocean health to K-12 classrooms in California and Mexico, provides Humboldt squid specimens and online educational materials to teachers throughout the US, and participates in family science-events, including the National Science and Engineering Festival in Washington DC. His current research on squid in the Sea of Cortez and Monterey Bay is focused on [control of skin color](#) and on alterations of [life history strategies](#) in response to climatic anomalies.

Brett Navin will act as the Institute Coordinator for 2021. He is a teacher at Blue Heron School in Port Townsend, WA, and was a Summer Scholar in this Institute in 2016. He was also the Institute Coordinator in 2018.

Additional guest faculty (and their primary contribution to this Institute in parentheses) will include:

- **Dr. Robert DeMott**, Edwin and Ruth Kennedy Distinguished Professor of English Emeritus, Ohio University. A former director of San Jose State University’s Steinbeck Research Center, he is the author of *Steinbeck’s Reading* and *Steinbeck’s Typewriter: Essays on His Art*; he is also the editor of *Working Days: The Journals of The Grapes of Wrath* and the widely used Penguin edition of *The Grapes of Wrath* as well as the four Steinbeck volumes published by the Library of America. He is a member of the editorial board of *Steinbeck Review*. (Steinbeck’s journals and nonfiction, *The Grapes of Wrath*)
- **Dr. Chris Fink**, Professor of English, Beloit College. He is a contributing editor for *Steinbeck Studies* and author of a collection of short fiction, *Farmer’s Almanac* as well

as a 2019 collection of stories, *Add This to the List of Things You Are* (Steinbeck's short stories)

- **Dr. Matthew Spangler**, Professor of Communication Studies, San Jose State University. He is author and director of over thirty adaptations of literature for the stage, including an acclaimed adaptation of *Kite Runner* (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. Persis Karim**, Director, Center for Iranian Diaspora Studies and Professor of Comparative and World Literature, San Francisco State University. She is the 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 and Chair of English at California State University, Channel Islands. She has published articles about English education, classroom discourse, and writing processes. She is the author of [*Writers at Play: Making the Space for Adolescents to Balance Imagination and Craft*](#) (2009) and co-author (with Eija Rougle) of *Building Literacy Through Classroom Discussion* (2005). (heteroglossia in *The Grapes of Wrath*).
- **Craig Strang**, Associate Director, Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California, Berkeley: Director and Principle 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)
- **William Souder** is a journalist and author. He has written of three books, including *Under a Wild Sky* (2004), a biography of John James Audubon that was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize; and *On a Farther Shore: The Life and Legacy of Rachel Carson*. His new biography of John Steinbeck, *Mad at the World*, will be published in 2020. (Environmental literature/writing biography).
- **Dr. Gavin Jones**, Frederick P. Rehmus Family Professor of the Humanities, Stanford University: teacher of Steinbeck literature, author of 3 books, including *Failure and the American Writer: A Literary History* (2014), and currently writing a book on Steinbeck. (Steinbeck's short fiction and other arts)
- **Pete Barraza**, Santa Monica High School. He has created courses in California literature as well as the Steinbeck Youth Institute. (teaching California history in secondary schools)
- Additional teachers of California history, marine biology, and Steinbeck studies and relevant authors will assist with workshops, discussions and field trips.

Expectations of NEH-supported Summer Scholars

Summer Scholars in the Steinbeck Institute should expect an intensive but rewarding experience. Workshops are scheduled Monday through Friday, with weekends free until Sunday evening at 5 PM, when we will gather for group discussions. Several weekday evenings are set aside for film showings, informal meals, and other gatherings. Institute sessions will include

lectures, discussions, small-group workshops, writing, participatory performance, and field work – each providing a different methodology for exploring the readings. Intertidal field work involves careful walking over wet, slippery terrain but is not physically strenuous or challenging. Summer Scholars are expected to attend all non-optional events.

Time at the Institute will be filled with discussion and activities, and participants are expected to have read all books before they arrive. Major works are *Of Mice and Men*, *The Long Valley*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, *Cannery Row* and *East of Eden*. A number of short reading assignments will be provided at the start of the Institute on a USB flash drive and in portfolios. Summer Scholars will also be provided with composition books for documenting their thoughts in the course of workshop sessions as well as during their free time.

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 final project. This project will include lesson plans that will be presented in outline at the closing session and submitted by one month after conclusion of the Institute. All final lesson plans will be posted on the [Teacher Resources](#) page of the Institute website.

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

Applicants' Qualifications and Eligibility

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.

First consideration will be given to applicants who *have not previously attended* an NEH Seminar or Institute. When choices must be made between equally qualified candidates, preference is given to those who will enhance the diversity of the program.

NEH Summer Institutes are designed principally for full-time and part-time teachers and librarians, including those new to the profession (teaching five years or less), in public, charter, independent, and religiously affiliated schools, as well as home schooling parents. Other K-12 school-system personnel such as administrators, substitute teachers, and curriculum developers are also eligible to participate.

Teachers at schools in the United States or its territorial possessions or Americans teaching in foreign schools where at least 50 percent of the students are American nationals are eligible for this program. Applicants must be United States citizens, residents of U.S. jurisdictions, or foreign nationals who have been residing in the United States or its territories for at least the three years immediately preceding the application deadline. Foreign nationals teaching abroad at non-U.S. chartered institutions are not eligible to apply.

Individuals may not apply to an NEH Summer Institute whose director is a family member, is affiliated with the same institution, or is someone with whom they have previously studied.

To be considered eligible, applicants must submit a complete application. This includes the on-line 2-page [Cover Sheet](#) and all materials specified in the Application Information and Instructions document.

Academic resources

Participants in the Steinbeck Institute will be able to use the [Harold A. Miller Library](#) at Hopkins Marine Station of Stanford University during business hours (9 AM – 5 PM weekdays)

and at other times by special arrangement. A collection of Steinbeck texts will be housed there. Individual study space and printers are also available in the library. In addition, the Directors will make key secondary texts available.

Visitor wireless connection will be available everywhere on the Hopkins campus. All participants are strongly encouraged to bring a laptop computer.

Housing

Participants in the NEH sponsored Steinbeck Institute 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. Double room rates are \$110 + tax per night for a large shared room with continental breakfast. A few singles are available for this same price. All rooms have Wi-Fi internet access. Participants may wish to arrange other accommodations, but we hope that many of you will select the Olympia, so that dynamic group interaction can occur.

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. [Monterey-Salinas Transit buses](#) serve all locations on the Monterey Peninsula, as well as Carmel, Big Sur, Salinas, and San Jose, where [rail connections](#) to San Francisco are possible. The [Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail](#) makes all locations between Pacific Grove and Castroville easily accessible and gives 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.

Stipends

Participants in NEH-supported three-week Institutes are awarded a \$2850 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, participants must attend all required events and activities for the duration of the Institute.

Continuing Education Credit (CEUs) for Summer Scholars

Optional continuing education units (CEUs are not equivalent to college course credit, however) can be earned for 1-6 units at the nominal fee. 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 this credit.

Application Procedures and Deadlines

Your completed application should be postmarked no later than March 1, 2022 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.*

Applications should include all materials specified in the 2020 Application Information and Instructions. An application Cover Sheet must also be completed, printed, and enclosed with the application. The application must include a resume of educational background, noting specific

courses taken in American literature and subjects related to the theme of this Summer Institute, and the name, title, phone number, and e-mail address of two professional references (not to exceed five pages). In addition, the application must include an essay addressing your academic and personal interests in the subject to be studied (no more than four double spaced pages). The essay is an important part of the application and should address your interest, qualifications, and experiences that equip you to do the planned work and to make a contribution to the learning community. It should also describe what you want to accomplish by participating, particularly the relationship of the program of study to your teaching assignments and goals, including any ideas for individual research and writing projects.

Three reviewers (both Directors and a collaborating high-school teacher) will evaluate applications. All decisions will be announced on Friday, March 27, 2020. Successful applicants will have until Friday, April 3 to accept or decline the offer.

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 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 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 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 2020