



Maps, Journeys and Geographies G221031

Saturday, October 8 to Friday, October 14

Welcome letter:

Dear Ghost Ranch Writers/Artists:

We're dropping you a note to welcome you to our class in this year's Ghost Ranch Fall Writing Festival, "Maps, Journeys, and Geographies: Where We Are Going, Where We Have Been." Our workshop is scheduled for October 8-14, 2022. We're looking forward to spending the week with all of you as we read, write, and create around this theme. We taught a version of this course together in the Fall Writing Festival 2021 and had a wonderful time writing, making maps and collages, trekking around the ranch, and sharing stories.

We'll have a brief organizational meeting on Saturday evening, October 8, after dinner, and then begin our classes at 9:00 Sunday morning through Thursday morning. On Thursday night there will be the annual art show of work created during the week and our participants' readings. At the show, everyone in our class is invited to read a piece written during the week, should you so choose. And I hope all of you will participate in that reading (no pressure!).

We'll have class in the morning from 9:00 to 12:00 each day. In the afternoons there will be other Ghost Ranch activities you can participate in. Afternoons can be your working time, too, so don't feel obligated to attend any activity that doesn't interest you. We'll convene again in the evenings at 7:00 for readings and discussion with other writers teaching in the Fall Writing Festival to give you the opportunity to ask questions and experience some of their work. On Thursday night we'll have the art show and readings by participants.

Our morning class format will go something like this: we'll begin each day (except for the first day) with a piece you've written based on the previous day's assignment. We consider all this work to be in the draft stage. You will have had time to only get the basics down and perhaps do a bit of revision. But by no means do we expect you to show up each morning with a publishable poem, story, or essay. The point of the workshop is to have you share your work with your colleagues, to get feedback on the strengths and weaknesses, and then go back to the drawing board (or, in this case, probably the computer). And, speaking of computers, if you are driving and can bring a computer and printer, that's fabulous. If you're flying and can't be encumbered with such technology, that's fine, too. We can always read hand-written copies, or perhaps you will have a friend or roommate who does have a computer/printer and would let you make copies of your work.

Finally, if you can't make copies, then we can listen to you read and offer our comments. We do think it is much easier to give effective commentary if colleagues have the text in front of them, but that certainly isn't necessary. We will also be doing some map making of our own and will hope to share those. After we have spent time looking at and listening to your work, we'll talk about material in a coursepack and get an assignment for the next day.

In order to facilitate our discussions and writing, we have put together a coursepack of selected readings and maps that will be relevant to our discussions and assignments. Some of the examples are overtly political, some personal, some serious, some funny. We'll use these as models and prompts, but you can always write/draw where the moment takes you. We will have the coursepack spiral bound, and the pages numbered. We will not be reading and discussing all the pieces and talking about them. We intend it to be a working notebook for us, with some material that we will not cover but which, when you get back home, you can turn to to enrich and follow up on your learning from the week. I will be able to get these through my MSU instructor's coursepack discount for about \$25.00. We hope that will not be a financial burden for anyone in the course. Most of the Ghost Ranch art classes have lab fees for materials of at least this amount, so this seems to be in keeping with that tradition. Of course, bring whatever materials you are most comfortable writing with, some paper, and your past experiences, wild imaginations, and love of writing. Art supplies, too, if you have them. If you have photos, scraps of fabric or maps, pictures from magazines or books, anything that might be useful in making a collage, bring those, too. Materials can be as elementary as crayons and colored pencils or as sophisticated as handmade papers, watercolors, inks, or acrylics. We will also bring paper and materials for the class to share. If you are an inexperienced or anxious writer, or artist, you will be fine, we promise. We will write, we will draw, we will learn, we will have fun. What more could we want?

One of the things you might do in preparation for the workshop is to think about what the words "journey," "travel" "map," and "geography" mean to you. What journeys have you taken, physically, mentally, emotionally? What do you *need* to take with you when you travel? What maps have you used? What maps have you created? What maps will you want in the future? In what geography are you most comfortable? What geographies have you experienced? Oh, so much to talk and write about!

If you have questions, please drop us a note (see email addresses, below). We would like to know that each of you received this letter, so just fire back an "I got it" email to us if you will. And then we will gather after dinner on October 8 so that we can meet each other, so we can give you further instructions for the week along with your coursepack.

You can email Anita (skeen@msu.edu) and/or Colleen (motherwit@suddenlink.net). For more information about Colleen's writing, music and other interests, visit her website at colleenanderson.com or motherwitdesign.com.

May your journey to the Ranch be safe and simple. See you in October.