

Welcome



Dust on the Page: Narratives of the Southwest G26010202

with Irina Ruvinsky
January 11-17, 2026

Dear Participants,

Welcome to Dust on the Page: Narratives of the Southwest! This course explores the unique confluence of cultures, landscapes, and imaginations that have defined New Mexico as both a real and symbolic space in literature and art. From Indigenous storytelling traditions to modernist experiments in fiction and photography, New Mexico has long drawn artists, writers, and visionaries seeking clarity, inspiration, or reinvention under its vast skies.

We'll read works by authors such as D. H. Lawrence, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Willa Cather, whose writings reflect the region's complex histories and mythologies. But we'll also pay close attention to visual artists—like Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams—who helped shape the cultural imaginary of the Southwest. Literature will be our foundation, but we'll consider how words and images work together to define place, memory, identity, and belonging. New Mexico is often called the “Land of Enchantment,” but enchantment can be both luminous and unsettling.

This course will ask: Who tells the stories of this land? Who is seen, and who is erased? What draws people to New Mexico, and what do they find—or fail to find—when they arrive? Bring your curiosity, your willingness to look and listen carefully, and your readiness to think across genres and disciplines.

I look forward to exploring this rich and layered landscape with you.

Warmly,

Irina Ruvinsky

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Workshop Itinerary:

Day 1: Arrival and the Myth of the Southwest

- Willa Cather, *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (Book One: "The Vicar Apostolic")
- D.H. Lawrence, "New Mexico" (essay from *Twilight in Italy and Other Essays*)
- Ansel Adams, selections from *Born Free and Equal* (optional visual reading)

Day 2: The Desert as Mirror (Visit: D.H. Lawrence Ranch, Taos)

- D.H. Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent* (selected chapters)
- Georgia O'Keeffe, letters from *My Faraway One* (selections from 1929–1934)
- Georgia O'Keeffe's paintings: *Black Place II* and *Pedernal*

Day 3: Native Ground

(Visit: Acoma Pueblo or Laguna Pueblo)

- Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (begin through healing journey)
- Leslie Marmon Silko, selections from *Storyteller* ("Laguna Woman" and photo-text sections)

Day 4: Ruins and Remains

(Visit: El Santuario de Chimayó or nearby ruins)

- Willa Cather, *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (Books Eight and Nine)
- D.H. Lawrence, "The Spirit of Place" (essay)
- Georgia O'Keeffe, sketches and paintings of churches (Ranchos de Taos Church)

Day 5: Dust on the Page

(Visit: Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe)

- Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (complete)
- Georgia O'Keeffe, selected writings and interviews

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Reading List: please purchase prior to workshop:

1. <https://dhlawrenceranch.unm.edu/d.h.-lawrence-ranch/writings-by-d.h.-lawrence-in-taos.html> (free)

2. Death Comes for the Archbishop: A Classic Novel of New Mexico Paperback – February 15, 2024 by Willa Cather (Author), Richard W. Etulain (Introduction)

3. The Man to Send Rain Clouds: Contemporary Stories by American Indians Paperback – December 1, 1992 by Kenneth Rosen (Editor)

-Suggested Books to Bring or Purchase:

- Willa Cather, Death Comes for the Archbishop (Vintage Classics or Penguin Edition)
- D.H. Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent (Oxford World's Classics)
- Leslie Marmon Silko, Ceremony (Penguin Classics)
- My Faraway One: Selected Letters of Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz (edited by Sarah Greenough)
- Storyteller by Leslie Marmon Silko (Pantheon)