

Great Matters: Zen, Literature, and the Southwest Schedule

Monday, July 20

5:30pm: Opening Reception at Santa Fe Prep

Tuesday, July 21

We'll spend the day reading and discussing introductory works on mindfulness and Zen Buddhism in tandem with works of poetry, fiction, and essays that engage with questions of life, the mind, language, and nature that are approached from a different angle in these spiritual texts. We may begin the day with a short walk or hike in the nearby trails to get to know one another and establish our norms and expectations for the course.

Wednesday, July 22

Begin the day with a trip out to Pecos National Historic Park and the ruins of a Spanish mission church, which we will explore while reading and discussing William Wordsworth's masterwork, "Tintern Abbey," a lyrical reflection on the way that the intersection of nature, ruins, and the mind can lead to "a sense sublime/ Of something far more deeply interfused." Returning to campus in the early afternoon, we will write and reflect on the experience, and if there is time, look at another masterpiece of Romantic nature poetry, Percy Shelley's "Mont Blanc" or "Ozymandias."

Thursday, July 23

Begin the day exploring Nambe Falls just north of Santa Fe, reading and reflecting on the reverential nature poetry of Native writers, Japanese haiku masters, and Chinese rivers-and-mountains poets. There will be time for quiet reflection and writing while exploring the falls and river, as well. This will likely be a full day excursion.

Friday, July 24

Ideally, part of our last day will feature a guest speaker, either Henry Shukman (a poet, novelist, and Zen teacher), Katie Arnold (writer, ultramarathoner, and Zen practitioner), or Natalie Goldberg (memoirist, haiku expert, and Zen teacher), either on campus or somewhere of the guest's preference. The exact agenda for the day will be finalized later, but it will most certainly include time for reflection and processing of the previous three days, the works we read, the lines we wrote, the landscape we explored (both inner and outer), and the interplay of all of these.