Biology 3N: Views of our Changing Seas – Literature and Science
(Working Syllabus for Spring 2017)

Instructor: William F. Gilly, Biology Department
Guest speaker: Susan Shillinglaw, English Dept., San Jose State Univ. and National Steinbeck Center

This seminar will examine issues concerning today's oceans through scientific, literary and historical lenses. We will focus on the Gulf of California, and our core text will be “The Log” portion of Sea of Cortez: A Leisurely Journal of Travel and Research (1940) by John Steinbeck and Ed Ricketts. This book is more than a travelogue or scientific report – it is a carefully structured treatise on the holistic thinking that is necessary to unravel complex problems, including ones that Steinbeck addressed in The Grapes of Wrath and other novels. Thus, we will work through The Log slowly and purposefully and supplement it with readings from historical and contemporary works as well as the poetry of Robinson Jeffers, a contemporary of Ricketts and Steinbeck who also lived on the Monterey Peninsula.

Before the course:

Obtain a copy of The Log from the Sea of Cortez (1951), Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics edition. If everyone has the same edition, it will greatly facilitate in-class discussions. The volume you want is: http://www.amazon.com/The-Log-Cortez-Penguin-Classics/dp/0140187448.

For the first class please read:

“About Ed Ricketts” Appendix, The Log from the Sea of Cortez (1951)


Also, may want to get a copy of Selected Poems by Robinson Jeffers (Vintage Books, Random House). The volume you want: http://www.walmart.com/ip/455482?wmlspartner=wlpa&adid=2222222227010268806&wl0=&wl1=g&wl2=c&wl3=53110619208&wl4=&wl5=pla&wl6=49009083299&veh=sem

During the course:

Weekly readings are indicated below. Additional short pieces may be added. All materials, with the exception of The Log from the Sea of Cortez will be posted on Canvas. We will discuss this material as a group each week.

Special Topics: Weekly in-class presentations on contemporary and historical issues will be made by teams. Syllabus material is meant to be read by all seminar participants; topic teams should research additional materials to present an oral report and lead a discussion (30-45 min). A brief discussion of the assigned materials should be followed by the oral report – structure your report to stimulate discussion. We can change a suggested topic to one of your choosing if you are passionate about a particular subject.

Group Topic: We will work together in class to plan and prepare a presentation of your design that will be delivered at in a “Teaching/Learning Steinbeck” session at the 2017 Steinbeck Festival at the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas. The theme of the festival is “Migrations.” http://www.steinbeck.org/festival.html

Required Field Trip: We will travel to Monterey on Friday afternoon, May 5 and go to sea on a whale-watching vessel on Saturday morning followed by a visit to Robinson Jeffers’ Tor House in Carmel in the afternoon. On Sunday we'll attend the 2017 Steinbeck Festival at the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, the theme of which is “Migrations.” We will deliver a presentation of your design at the “Teaching/Learning Steinbeck” session and work on this together in class. If it is impossible for you to attend this field trip, an alternative field trip will be individually arranged
Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (4/6) Ed Ricketts, John Steinbeck, Joseph Campbell and Robinson Jeffers -- Holistic Worldview

Jeffers, R (1925) “Science” and (1948) Preface to The Double-Axe and Other Poems, p. vii-viii

**Group Topic:** Steinbeck Festival project plan

Week 2 (4/13) Preparation and Departure

*The Log from the Sea of Cortez*: Introduction – Chapter 5.
Jeffers, R (1924) “Continent’s End”

**Special Topic:** Emergence


**Group Topic:** Steinbeck Festival project update

Week 3 (4/20) Discovery

*Log from the Sea of Cortez*: Chapters 6-9.
Jeffers (1932) “The Place for No Story”

**Special Topic:** Exploration and exploitation

Wagner, HR (1929) *Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast of America in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 1-14
del Barco, M (1770) *The Natural History of Baja California*, Ch. 10: “About Testaceans, p. 248-275

**Group Topic:** Steinbeck Festival project update

Week 4 (4/27) Searching, Finding and Warp

*Log from the Sea of Cortez*: Chapters 10-13
Jeffers, R (1948) Advice to Pilgrims

**Special Topic:** Marine Protected Areas

Harden, G (1968), Tragedy of the Commons, *Science* 162:1243-1248

**Group Topic:** Steinbeck Festival project update

Week 5 (5/4) Nonteleological Thinking

*Log from the Sea of Cortez*, Chapter 14
**Group Topic: Presentation for Steinbeck Festival**

**FIELD TRIP (5/5-7).** Whale-watching, Robinson Jeffers Torr House, and National Steinbeck Center

**Week 6 (5/11) Exuberance**  
*Log from the Sea of Cortez: Chapters 15-19*  
Jeffers, R (1951) "The Beauty of Things," (1928) "Tor House"  
Beebe, W (1938) Zaca Venture, Chapter 5, "The Magic Banks"

**Special Topic: Sea of Cortez: Aquarium of the World**  
Cannon, R (1966) *The Sea of Cortez*, "The Story of the Sea of Cortez" (p.8-17) and "Life and Movement of the Sea" (p.35-61).  
Grey, Z (1925) *Tales of Fishing in Virgin Seas*, Chapters 19-20

**Week 7 (5/18) Changing Tides**  
*Log from the Sea of Cortez: Chapters 20-25*  
Jeffers, R (1951) “Animals,” (1947) "Orca"

**Special Topic: Shifting baselines**  
Miranda GC (2012) A Fishing day, in *Memorias de un pescador. En el Golfo de California* (translated by S. Mahieux)

**Week 8 (5/25) Beginning of the End**  
*Log from the Sea of Cortez: Chapters 26-27*  
Jeffers, R (1937) "The Purse-Seine," (1922) Salmon Fishing

**Special Topic: Trawling and More**  

**Week 9 (6/1) Closing the Circle**  
*Log from the Sea of Cortez: Chapters 28-29*  

**Special Topic: Climate Connections**  