

## Wallace Stegner

Novelist, historian, environmentalist

**Purpose:** We will explore the breadth of Stegner's remarkable career as not only a prize-winning author, but also as a historian of the West and an early activist for environmental causes.

<b>Course #</b>	19SWS
<b>Format:</b>	Seminar
<b>Moderator:</b>	Bobbie Reitt
<b>Co-moderator:</b>	Joan McKelvey
<b>Date and Time:</b>	Tuesday, 1:30-3:30 10 weeks, starting February 26
<b>Location:</b>	Smith College, Dewey Hall Common

**Description:** Stegner (1909-1993) is best known for his "big" novels (*Big Rock Candy Mountain*, *Angle of Repose*, *Crossing to Safety*), but his importance to American culture generally is much less appreciated. He was important to the development of creative writing education and a mentor to many authors beginning their careers (e.g., Wendell Berry, Tillie Olson, Larry McMurtry). He also published many fiction and nonfiction works that enhance readers' historical, cultural, and environmental understanding of the West. His deep concern for our future led him into efforts to educate Americans, especially politicians, about Western environmental issues that could be addressed adequately only at the national level.

We will discuss two books and several short pieces of Stegner's to better appreciate his daring and skill as a writer, and we will all read a probing biography by Jackson Benson to ground our discussions of Stegner's achievements.

**Role of participants:** Do the required reading and prepare either to lead discussion of a part of the required reading or to report on a subject related to our reading. Suggested topics for such reports will be provided by the moderators.

**Resources:** Jackson J Benson, *Wallace Stegner: His Life and Work*; Wallace Stegner, *Angle of Repose*; Wallace Stegner, *Wolf Willow: A History, a Story, and a Memory of the Last Frontier*. The Wallace Stegner essays "The Wilderness Letter" and "The Sense of Place" to be supplied by the moderators.

**About the Moderators:** Bobbie Reitt, retired book editor, has been in LIR since 2003 and has led about a dozen seminars in literature and American history.

Joan McKelvey is a retired social worker who practiced family therapy for 30 years in a variety of settings. She has been an LIR member for 9 years and co-moderated a previous seminar.

**Maximum number of participants:** 18

**Auditors accepted:** yes, up to 2