

Annenberg/CPB  
Professional Development Workshop Guide

# **Artifacts & Fiction:**

Workshop in American Literature

An eight-part professional development workshop  
for grades 9–12 literature and language arts teachers

**Produced by Oregon Public Broadcasting with NCTE Assembly on American Literature**

***Artifacts & Fiction: Workshop in American Literature***

is produced by  
Oregon Public Broadcasting with  
NCTE Assembly on American Literature

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P.O. Box 2345  
S. Burlington, VT 05407-2345

[info@learner.org](mailto:info@learner.org)

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# About the Workshop

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## What Is *Artifacts & Fiction*?

*Artifacts & Fiction* is a video-based professional development workshop designed to help new and experienced teachers teach American literature in its historical and cultural context. Through videos, hands-on activities, and print and Web-based resources, *Artifacts & Fiction* will guide you through the process of expanding your classroom practices as you pair cultural and historical artifacts with works of literature. This approach can heighten your students' analytic skills and help them develop a deeper understanding of course material. The workshop is geared primarily to high school teachers, although middle school teachers or college instructors might find they can adapt the approach to their classrooms.

## The Videos

The video component of the workshop features nine English teachers who come together to learn methods of pairing artifacts from the disciplines of art, religion, politics, and history with the American literature they are currently teaching in their classes. Each of the eight hour-long videos in the workshop presents the teachers working with a guest university professor in a class focused on using artifacts from a particular discipline. At the end of each class, the teachers work together in the computer lab to develop their own lesson plans using artifacts from the featured discipline. Each video then follows one of the teachers into the high school classroom, where she or he applies this new teaching approach. Afterward, the teacher reflects on what aspects of the lesson were successful—and what could be improved in future classes.

## The Workshop Sessions

This workshop guide provides specific information on the activities for each workshop session. Before watching an *Artifacts & Fiction* video, you should read the Introduction for that session. You should consider the session's Close Reading Questions and read the assigned excerpt from the literature discussed in the onscreen class. You may also want to view the listed episode of *American Passages*, an Annenberg/CPB series on American literary movements, which will provide important information for understanding the works of literature covered in that workshop session. (Viewing the appropriate *American Passages* video is required if you are taking the workshop for credit and recommended if you are not.)

As you watch the *Artifacts & Fiction* video, you will follow the teachers' learning process, examining the same artifacts they discuss in the onscreen class. The guide directs you to stop the video at designated intervals, so that you can engage in activities to review and assess the steps the onscreen teachers take as they prepare lesson plans using the featured type of artifacts. At the end of each two-hour workshop session, you will be prepared to create a lesson plan pairing the same type of artifact with a work of literature you are currently teaching. This will be your homework assignment.

## What Are Artifacts, and How Do We “Read” Them?

In this workshop, the term “artifact” is used to mean some item (such as a painting, a map, a song, or a newspaper advertisement) that documents a particular historical era or cultural practice. *Artifacts & Fiction* pairs the reading of artifacts with the reading of literature; this pairing is a way to enhance critical thinking skills while providing a source for historical and cultural contexts of American literature. When approaching an artifact, it is useful to think of how we teach our students to read literature with a level of sophistication—so that they not only understand *what* a text says (the literal plot of “what happened”) but also appreciate the importance of *how* a text depicts what happened (the use of rhyme scheme, diction, character development, etc.).

The analysis of artifacts involves a similar process of close reading, with attention to the details of how things are represented. The way a figure is posed in a portrait (wearing a particular style of clothing, pictured with specific household objects, etc.) may reveal cultural values shared by the painter and the subject. The use of rhythm and repetition in a song may indicate what information or beliefs are being emphasized, particularly if the original singers and audience for the song came from a culture that privileged the oral transmission of information. For a literature teacher, reading a poem, story, or other literary text may seem more familiar than “reading” a painting, song, or other artifact. The workshop will help you develop skills for selecting and analyzing artifacts so that you can share this approach with your students.

# About the Workshop, cont'd.

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## Why Use Artifacts in a Literature Class?

Bringing artifacts into the literature classroom serves several valuable purposes. A carefully chosen artifact can provide information about the historical period or cultural context in which a work of literature was produced or set. As students explore a political artifact, for example, they discover information about past politics, such as how the governing class felt about newly arrived immigrants. Examining artifacts allows students to explore this background for themselves and then apply it to literature, rather than relying solely on a teacher's lecture for information about the literature. The use of artifacts is a particularly effective approach for engaging students, who find that literature comes alive when they can connect it to what actual people did, made, or thought—something you'll see happen in the video classroom footage. Introducing artifacts into your classroom can also serve as a foundation for teaching more multicultural literature because exploring artifacts helps students approach unfamiliar texts with a better understanding of cultures that differ from their own.

The analysis of literature is similar to the analysis of artifacts because both require students to ask thoughtful questions, explore their own explanatory hypotheses, and draw insightful conclusions. Although the analysis of artifacts is a new activity for many students, when they are taught to do it, they develop close reading skills that enhance their ability to analyze familiar literary forms as well. This approach is especially relevant in schools where literature courses are paired with other disciplines, such as social studies. Even if your school does not pair classes explicitly, students should find the approach helps them make connections between what they read for their English classes and what they study in other courses and disciplines. Indeed, the approach can be particularly engaging for students who feel stronger in visual arts, music, or other fields than they do in English.

## What Types of Artifacts Can Be Paired With Literature?

The workshop sessions focus on eight types of artifacts, explored through the disciplines in which they are studied.

### Workshop 1: Visual Arts

This session introduces the pairing of visual art objects with American literature by examining how two paintings by the early American portraitist John Singleton Copley can help teachers and students better understand the literary project of self-representation in Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*.

### Workshop 2: Political History

In this session, teachers use political artifacts—items such as laws and “Wanted” posters that relate directly to the political process, and items such as newspapers that reflect political views and movements—to explore the political contexts reflected in John Rollin Ridge's nineteenth-century fictionalized story of the outlaw Joaquin Murieta and Yoshiko Uchida's *Picture Bride*, a novel about early twentieth-century Japanese immigrants to the United States.

### Workshop 3: Social History

This session pairs the social history artifacts of a bill of sale for a slave and an illustration of a slave auction with Frederick Douglass's slave narrative. It also pairs World War I recruitment posters with Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. These pairings demonstrate how social history artifacts, which document the experiences of ordinary people, allow teachers and students to analyze the choices made by literary characters.

### Workshop 4: Oral Histories

During this session, teachers learn to use oral history artifacts—recordings of spoken and sung works—to better understand written literature. Mexican American *corridos* and folktales provide cultural contexts for a poem and essay by Gloria Anzaldúa and for Cormac McCarthy's young adult novel *All the Pretty Horses*. Both authors' works depict the oral transmission of information and values in bilingual Mexican American communities.

### Workshop 5: Domestic Architecture

Teachers in this session use photographs of houses from different eras and cultures as domestic architecture artifacts. They explore how cultural values are reflected in domestic spaces as they consider the thematic significance of literal and metaphoric homes in the poetry of Luci Tapahonso, Simon Ortiz, and Emily Dickinson.

# About the Workshop, cont'd.

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## Workshop 6: Cultural Geography

This session introduces the use of cultural geography artifacts, such as photographs and maps of specific neighborhoods, to understand how the spaces represented in Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* reflect the characters' racial and class positions.

## Workshop 7: Ritual Artifacts

In this session, teachers explore how individuals use secular and religious rituals to create a sense of order and meaning for their worlds. Examining Puritan gravestones as ritual artifacts provides a way to better understand the beliefs expressed in Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, Jonathan Edwards's sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," and Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*.

## Workshop 8: Ceremonial Artifacts

This session invites teachers to consider how ceremonial artifacts function in the expression and transmission of religious beliefs by pairing Native American baskets with Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Ceremony* and two traditional Native American tales.

You can learn more about each type of artifact by reading the Introduction for its corresponding session and exploring the Discipline Tutorial on the *Artifacts & Fiction* Web site before you watch the workshop video.

As you proceed through the workshop, you should consider what artifacts will best supplement the literature you teach. If your literature class is paired with a history class, or if you have a helpful colleague who is particularly knowledgeable in a field such as art, those might be good disciplines for you to work with first. If there is a type of artifact not covered in the workshop that you feel would be useful for your students, you can adapt the steps for teaching with artifacts provided here. *Artifacts & Fiction* isn't intended to show you how to teach only the literature or artifacts featured in the videos. Rather, it provides you with a range of tools you can use on your own to expand your teaching practices and thereby enrich your students' engagement with literature.

In the videos, you will see teachers who, like you, are learning to use artifacts for the first time. Some express doubts about their abilities to introduce students to unfamiliar objects such as a Puritan gravestone or a Native American basket. After using their new lesson plans, the teachers in the videos reflect on which aspects of their own classes went well and which didn't; this reflection is an important step in refining their teaching strategies. The workshop activities will give you opportunities to consider your responses to the teachers' classes, learning from their successes and challenges as you prepare lessons to use with your own students.

## How Do I Find Artifacts To Use With My Students?

The *Artifacts & Fiction* and *American Passages* Web sites contain components that can help you pair individual literary texts with artifacts. On the *Artifacts & Fiction* site ([www.learner.org/channel/workshops/artifacts](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/artifacts)), you can use the Artifact & Literature Pair Finder to view suggestions of specific artifacts to use with particular works of literature. As you develop lesson plans, you can consult the *American Passages* Web site ([www.learner.org/amerpass](http://www.learner.org/amerpass)). At that site, you will find an archive of artifacts that you can search by time period, type of artifact, relevant literary movement, geographical region, ethnic group, or keyword. Once you search the archive and select artifacts relevant to the literature your students are reading, you can use the Build a Slideshow feature to assemble the selected images or sound files with your own captions. This slideshow can be saved for viewing online by you and your students, or it can be downloaded to a disk to show on a computer without Internet access.

Although the *American Passages* archive contains over 3,000 catalogued artifacts, it is only one possible resource you might use. Once you become more comfortable with the use of artifacts, you may find that searching the books in your school or public library can be a good source for visual images, the texts of particular laws, or other relevant artifacts. If you are looking for material on the Internet, remember that the accuracy and quality of Web sites varies greatly. One excellent resource is the Library of Congress Web site ([www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)), where you will find the American Memory Project, a searchable archive providing vast local, regional, and national artifacts related to American history and culture. The site also contains an Online Gallery of Exhibitions curated by the Library of Congress, which includes more in-depth explanations of particular artifacts. In general, government, museum, and university Web sites are good sources for accurate archives (although student-created Web pages on university sites may be less rigorously researched). These sites can be found using standard Internet search engines (you might choose to limit your search to sites ending in ".edu" to find university archives).

## About the Workshop, cont'd.

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### Search Tips

When you are searching within a particular archive, you will find more items if you repeat the search several times with variations in the keywords. For example, “car,” “auto,” “automobile,” “motor car,” and “horseless carriage” may each yield different results, even within the same archive (using a specific manufacturer or model name might bring up additional items). When you search for older materials, be aware that you might need to employ language we consider arcane or even offensive: “colored,” “negro,” “Afro-American,” or “African,” as well as “black” or “African American,” for example; even “Chinaman” or “Chinee” along with “Chinese American” or “Asian American.” As you will see in several of the *Artifacts & Fiction* videos, students learn a great deal from artifacts that depict racist attitudes, so it can be valuable to find items that might be catalogued in archives according to racist terms.

If you are interested in developing more advanced activities for your students, you can have them locate their own artifacts. You can guide their search by directing them to a particular archive. For example, in Workshop 6: Cultural Geography, teacher Michaela Miller has her students search archives at the American Memory Project and the New Orleans Public Library Web site for artifacts relevant to Kate Chopin’s novel *The Awakening*. Students can also use the *Artifacts & Fiction* and *American Passages* Web resources described above for their own searches. Your school librarian may be able to help you find other Web sites or books relevant to particular authors, literary movements, or cultural groups. You can also send students to the library with a directed assignment, such as finding a newspaper article on a particular historical event depicted in the literature they are reading.

However you and your students find relevant artifacts, remember that the most important step is using that material to deepen students’ thinking about literature. Once you have selected useful artifacts, schedule ample class time for students to analyze and discuss them; students also need time to explore how the artifacts help them understand the literature they have read. As you watch the *Artifacts & Fiction* videos, you will have opportunities to observe and assess how the guest professors and onscreen teachers guide students through this process, a useful step in planning approaches to use in your own classes.

## Other Workshop Resources

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The Appendix of this guide includes several rubrics you can use on your own and with your students. These include a six-step process for selecting appropriate artifacts, close reading tips for effective reading of literature, and the Glossary, which explains relevant terms used in the workshop. Another resource referenced in several of the workshop sessions is the CAATS acronym (Creator, Assumptions, Audience, Time, and Significance), a method for analyzing artifacts.

On the *Artifacts & Fiction* Web site, you will find PDF copies of each chapter of this guide. You will also find the Discipline Tutorial, which you can use to learn more about the eight disciplines covered in the workshops, as well as the Artifact & Literature Pair Finder. Additionally, there is a link to the *American Passages* Web site, which contains the Archive and the Build a Slideshow tool. The *Artifacts & Fiction* Web site also includes a Behind the Scenes section where you will find information about the teachers and interdisciplinary experts featured in the videos, the lesson plans and handouts used in the high school classrooms, the complete transcripts of the classes shown in the videos, teacher journals, and transcripts of the teacher reflective interviews.

### Lesson Planning Tools

*Artifacts & Fiction* is intended to provide you with new tools for developing your own lesson plans, whether you are using the type of artifacts featured in the videos or others that are appropriate to the literature you're teaching. There's no limit to the number or types of artifacts that might be used with a particular literary text. For example, in Workshop 3: Social History, you'll see teachers learn to analyze a bill of sale for a slave to expand their understanding of Frederick Douglass's slave narrative. If you are teaching that slave narrative, however, you might choose some of the other types of artifacts featured in the workshop. Douglass's text could also be paired with cultural geography artifacts that provide evidence about antebellum life in the area of Maryland, including the Baltimore wharfs where Douglass was enslaved. This pairing might help students understand how the lives of urban slaves differed from those of slaves on plantations, and why Douglass's experience in Baltimore helped him in his eventual escape from slavery. Or the text could be paired with political history documents, such as laws that prohibited the education of slaves or that governed the treatment of slaves by non-owners like Covey, a major figure in Douglass's narrative. You might also compare the written narrative to the oral history artifacts of slavery, such as slave songs or the oral testimony of former slaves recorded by Work Projects Administration interviewers in the 1930s. A formal portrait of Douglass could be used as a relevant visual art artifact, allowing a comparison between how Douglass represents himself in writing and how he was visually represented to his nineteenth-century audience. Ritual objects could be used to help students understand the way Douglass invokes Christianity (as when he compares his escape from slavery to the resurrection of Christ portrayed in the New Testament), and the reasons he critiques it (as a method the hypocritical slaveholders used to assert their own superiority over slaves). Sermons originally delivered to slaves and to slave owners would thus be important to consider.

As this list of possibilities indicates, bringing artifacts into your classroom can provide manifold approaches for enriching your students' analyses of American literature and expanding their understanding of the historical and cultural contexts in which that literature was produced or set. In the videos, you will see some teachers bring the same artifacts and literature they studied in the onscreen class into their own classrooms. Other teachers branch out, using different artifacts and texts. You might find it easier to begin by incorporating one of the videos' lesson plans into your classroom, waiting to develop your own pairings until you feel more comfortable with this teaching method—or you might feel ready to create your own pairings right away. Whatever approach you choose, *Artifacts & Fiction* will help you discover new ways to enhance your own lesson plans for any literature you might teach in your classes.

# For Facilitators

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If you are leading this workshop:

- Before each workshop session, consult the appropriate guide chapter to find out what artifact to download from the online archive on the *American Passages* Web site ([www.learner.org/amerpass](http://www.learner.org/amerpass)). Print out or photocopy enough copies for all your workshop participants. The archive selections are also available for download on the *Artifacts & Fiction* Web site, delineated by appropriate session.
- Make sure participants know what reading to complete before attending the session (a general overview of this material is described above under the heading The Workshop Sessions).
- Read through the entire guide chapter prior to the workshop session, noting when you will need to stop the video for workshop activities.
- During the workshop session, moderate group discussions in response to the questions posed throughout the guide. Discussions of teaching strategies are dynamic and will be shaped by the interests and experiences of your participants. Be sure to keep track of the time allotted for particular activities, so that you can cover all the necessary material for the session.
- Vary which participants work together in the small group activities from one session to another, so that everyone has an opportunity to work with the multiple points of view of all the other participants.

## Materials Needed

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To conduct this workshop, you will need:

- *Artifacts & Fiction* videos 1-8.
- *American Passages* videos "Native Voices," "Exploring Borderlands," "Utopian Promise," "Spirit of Nationalism," "Masculine Heroes," "Slavery and Freedom," and "Search for Identity" (required for participants taking the workshop for credit, and recommended for all others). These videos are available for viewing online at [www.learner.org/progdesc/index.html?uid=164&sj=>](http://www.learner.org/progdesc/index.html?uid=164&sj=>).
- Equipment to view homework and workshop session video assignments.
- This *Artifacts & Fiction* guide.
- Internet access to the *Artifacts & Fiction* and *American Passages* Web sites ([www.learner.org/channel/workshops/artifacts](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/artifacts) and [www.learner.org/amerpass](http://www.learner.org/amerpass)).
- Literature readings described in the appropriate *Artifacts & Fiction* guide chapter.

# Who's Who

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## Academic Director

**Jennifer Brotherton** began teaching in the fall of 1995 at Timberline High School in Lacey, Washington, where she taught ninth-grade English and 12th-grade AP literature classes for four years. She received her M.A. in English from Portland State University in the Spring of 2001. She has taught composition at Portland State University and Mt. Hood Community College, and she designed curriculum materials and taught courses for distance learning programs in the Portland State University English department. She returned to Timberline High School this year where she currently teaches 10th-grade world literature and 12th-grade AP literature. In addition to serving as academic director for *Artifacts & Fiction*, she contributed materials to this guide and the Web site's Artifact & Literature Pair Finder, and appears in the computer lab segment of Workshop 2: Political History and Workshop 5: Domestic Architecture.

## Teachers

**Charley Barniskis** began teaching English in 2000 at Sandy High School in the small town of Sandy, Oregon. He has taught sophomore composition, junior American literature, and senior English courses. Charley is featured in Workshop 1: Visual Arts.

**Jennifer Doncan** has worked in the Portland Public School district since 1989, first at Harriet Tubman Middle School, then as a teacher on special assignment and curriculum coordinator for a cluster of schools within the district. She currently teaches at Jefferson High School, where she has served as English department chair and advises several student publications and organizations.

**Marc Jolley** began teaching in 2001 in the language arts department at Southridge High School in suburban Beaverton, Oregon. This year, his school added a new Native American unit to its American literature class, which Marc introduces in Workshop 8: Ceremonial Artifacts.

**Virginia King** has taught English to high school students at Hawaii Preparatory Academy in Kamuela and college-level French to undergraduates at the University of North Carolina, the University of Pennsylvania, and Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. Since 1998, she has taught English at Catlin Gabel, a private preparatory school in Portland. Virginia's junior-senior elective, Romance and the Western World, is featured in Workshop 3: Social History.

**Michaela Miller** began teaching at River Ridge High School in rural Lacey, Washington, in 1996. She has served as teacher on special assignment as well as English department chair, and was the recipient of a 2001 Gates Foundation grant to become National Board-certified. Michaela is currently teaching at River Ridge High School and is featured in Workshop 4: Oral History and Workshop 6: Cultural Geography.

**Jeffrey Reagan** began his teaching career as educational assistant at River Ridge High School in rural Lacey, Washington. Since 1999, he has taught American literature at Timberline High School, also in Lacey.

**Sara Salvi** began her teaching career in the Portland public schools in 1977. She has taught English and Spanish at St. Mary's Academy, a Catholic girls' school, since 1987. In addition to teaching American literature courses, she also serves as English department chair. Sara is currently teaching at St. Mary's Academy and is featured in Workshop 5: Domestic Architecture.

**Angela Vahsholtz-Andersen** has taught at Skyview High School in suburban Vancouver, Washington since its opening in 1997. She has team-taught freshmen, sophomores, and juniors in literature classes paired with technology, Pacific Northwest history, and world history. Angela is currently teaching at Skyview High School and is featured in Workshop 2: Political History.

**Paul Warner** has been teaching in suburban Vancouver, Washington since 1996, first at Frontier Junior High School and now at Mountain View High School. He has taught English, Pacific Northwest history, American history, and science fiction. He taught his first set of American literature classes while participating in *Artifacts & Fiction*. Paul's 11th-grade American literature course is featured in Workshop 7: Ritual Artifacts.

# Who's Who, cont'd.

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## Interdisciplinary Experts

**Blake Allmendinger** is a professor of American literature in the English department at UCLA. He grew up on a cattle ranch in Colorado and specializes in literature of the American West. He is the author of *The Cowboy, Ten Most Wanted: The New Western Literature* and a forthcoming book on the literature of the African American West. Blake is featured in Workshop 2: Political History.

**David Bjelajac** is a professor of art history and human sciences at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He is the author of three books, including an introductory thematic survey of American art titled *American Art: A Cultural History*. Currently, he is working on a second edition of the survey, which will be published by Prentice Hall. David is featured in Workshop 1: Visual Arts.

**Mary Pat Brady** is an assistant professor of English at Cornell University, where she has served as the associate director of the Latino Studies Program. Her areas of specialization include Chicano/a studies, race and gender, world literature, women's studies, and general American literature. She is the author of *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies: Chicana Literature and the Urgency of Space*. Mary Pat is featured in Workshop 4: Oral Histories.

**Peter Hales** is a professor of art history, a University Scholar, and the director of the American Studies Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is the author of a number of books on the American cultural landscape and an essayist and photographer for a number of projects—in books, journals, and Web pages—exploring American culture in arts, literature, and music. Under the aegis of the American Studies Institute, he has taught a generation of international teachers, teacher-trainers, curriculum developers, and textbook writers from more than 50 countries. He is currently at work on two new books: *Outside the Gates*, a cultural history of postwar America, and *Freeways, Now*, a cultural appreciation of the American landscape of movement. Peter is featured in Workshop 6: Cultural Geography.

**Laura Arnold Leibman** is an associate professor of English and humanities at Reed College in Portland, Oregon. She teaches courses in Native American literature, Jewish American literature, and ethnic American poetry. She has been the recipient of Fulbright, NEH, and Culpeper grants, and she is working on a cultural edition of Experience Mayhew's *Indian Converts*. She also served as a lead academic advisor to *Artifacts & Fiction*. Laura is featured in Workshop 5: Domestic Architecture.

**Lois Leveen** has taught courses in multicultural American literature at UCLA and Reed College. She has designed and delivered professional development workshops on teaching with technology and on addressing race in the middle school, high school, and college classrooms. She is an editor of *The Heath Anthology of American Literature* and a primary investigator in the Visible Knowledge Project, a five-year national study on educational uses of information technology. In addition to serving as a lead academic advisor on *Artifacts & Fiction*, she contributed materials to this guide and to the Web site's Artifacts & Literature Pair Finder, and appears in the computer lab segments of Workshop 5: Domestic Architecture and Workshop 8: Ceremonial Artifacts.

**Greg Sarris** is a professor of English at Loyola Marymount University, as well as chair of the Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria (formerly known as the Federated Coast Miwok). His short story collection *Grand Avenue* became a Robert Redford-produced HBO teleplay. He is also the author of *Keeping Slug Woman Alive*, *Mabel McKay: Weaving the Dream*, and *Watermelon Nights*. Greg is featured in Workshop 8: Ceremonial Artifacts.

**Pancho Savery** is a professor of English and humanities at Reed College in Portland, Oregon. He is the author of numerous articles and essays, and he is co-editor of *Approaches to Teaching Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man*. Pancho's teaching and research interests include modern American drama, African American literature, cultural and literary theory, and Native American literature. Pancho is featured in Workshop 3: Social History.

**David H. Watters** is the director of the Center for New England Culture and a professor of English at the University of New Hampshire. He has directed summer teacher institutes on Nathaniel Hawthorne, Robert Frost, Native American studies, and New Hampshire history. His research and teaching interests lead him to graveyards and other historic features of the New England landscape. He is the co-editor of the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of New England Culture*. David is featured in Workshop 7: Ritual Artifacts.