National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute
George Washington and His Legacy: Myths, Symbols and Reality
Boston University School of Education
July 19 to August 8, 2009

Syllabus

Please note that the syllabus, while essentially outlined below, may be subject to some shifts to accommodate educational opportunities that may arise during the Institute and that an updated syllabus will be posted in late spring of 2009.

Week One

Sunday
July 19
4:00 p.m. Meet at 10 Buick Street Lobby
6:00-9:00 Working Dinner:
Orientation.
Introduction to Program: Peter Gibbon, Peter Wright
Frank Grizzard. Guest Speaker: R. B. Bernstein

Preparation for Monday: Read Samuel Eliot Morison’s, “The Young Man Washington,” and Frank Grizzard’s, “Education”—both in handout of readings (course packet).

Monday
July 20
9:00-10:30 Two Views of George Washington

Topics:
- How, according to Morison, did the frontier and Stoicism affect Washington?
- How does Washington’s early life (education, philosophy, Mount Vernon, marriage, health, family, money, frontier service) prepare him for public service and leadership?
- Why does Jones say Washington had a “complex character”?
- What kind of general was Washington according to Jones? What does Jones mean when he describes Washington as “Fabian by necessity, he was a gambler by instinct.”
- What does Jones say was the significance of the Trenton victory? What does the victory show about Washington’s character according to Jones?
- Why does Jones say the general’s contribution to that “fiction” was only a part of the story, but a vital and irreplaceable part?
• How does Jones evaluate Washington as a general?

10:30-11:00  Break


*Topics:*
  • What role does Washington have in the success of the Constitutional Convention as well as in shaping the Constitution?
  • How does Jones assess Washington as President?
  • What personality traits made Washington an effective leader?
  • What does Jones see as Washington’s legacy?

12:30-1:30  Lunch


2:30-3:00  Break

3:00-4:00  Discussion of video with Frank Grizzard.

*Topics:*
  • How does Smith suggest we trivialize Washington today?
  • Compare Smith’s assessment with that of Jones
  • In what ways, according to Smith, does Washington grow?
  • How do Jones and Smith “humanize” Washington?
  • How does Washington remain heroic?
  • How does Washington’s personal life connect with public policy?
  • How is he shaped by death, illness, love?


**Tuesday**

**July 21**

**9:00-10:00**  Talk by Frank Grizzard, Former Associate Editor, *The Washington Papers:* “The Real Washington.” Grizzard will also review electronic resources available through the Fitzpatrick edition of “The Washington Papers.”

10:00-10:30  Discussion with Grizzard.
Topic:
- How can Washington be made significant for K-12 students? What materials would work well for this age group?

10:30-11:00  Break

11:00-12:30  Discussion, Frank Grizzard *George Washington: A Biographical Companion.*

Topic:
- In reference to the introduction to *A Biographical Companion* (handout)–intellect, money, marriage, health, ambition, temper, attitude towards fame.

12:30-1:30  Lunch

1:30-2:30  Guest Speaker: Peter Henriques: “Washington and Women.”


**Wednesday**

**July 22**

9:00-10:30  Frank Grizzard and Peter Henriques lecture on Washington’s attitudes on religion and death.

*Topic*

10:30-12:00  Questions for Grizzard and Henriques from institute participants on Washington’s relevance today.

12:00-1:00  Lunch


Preparation for Thursday: Read Washington’s “Farewell Address” and Joseph Ellis, “The Farewell: Washington’s Wisdom at the End” in *George*
Washington Reconsidered. Read some more of Washington’s letters on the Rediscovering George Washington Web site, particularly letters from the Gilder Lehrman Collection relating to the presidential years.

Thursday
July 23
9:00-1:00
Visit to Adams National Historical Park in Quincy, Massachusetts.
1:00-2:00

Preparation for Friday: Read Stephen E. Lucas (ed.) The Quotable George Washington in handout of readings. Pick out five quotations from The Quotable George Washington that you feel reveal his philosophy and personality traits. In two pages, describe why you think the five quotations you selected are significant. Feel free to draw on other information you have picked up on Washington.

Friday
July 24
9:00-10:30 Small group discussions on The Quotable George Washington.
Topics:
• Did anything surprise you reading these quotations?
• Did any of them confirm what you already thought?

10:30-11:00 Break
11:00-12:30 Small group discussions on Washington’s The Rules of Civility.
Topics:
• How does Smith feel Washington applied the rules?
• What reservations does Smith have about historians relying on these rules as a key to Washington’s character?

Preparation for Monday: Howard Zinn: A People’s History, Chapter 4, “Tyranny is Tyranny,” and Chapter 5, “A Kind of Revolution.”

Week Two

Monday
July 27
9:00-10:30 Guest speaker: Howard Zinn: “A Radical Critique of the Revolution.”
10:30-11:00 Break
11:00-12:00 Zinn, Question and Answer
Topics:
- Can you imagine the Revolution or the Constitution without Washington?
- What role did slaves and Native Americans play in the Revolution?
- To what degree was the Revolution “a rich man’s war, a poor man’s fight?”
- What should American students be taught about George Washington?
- Do you believe in “objective” history?


Tuesday
July 28
9:00-10:30 Discussion, led by Peter Gibbon and Frank Grizzard.
Topic:
- What is Weems’ attitude towards Washington’s personal life?
- According to Wecter, what was Weems’ influence?
- How does Boorstin contrast Washington’s reputation in the 1790s with his reputation in the 19th century?

10:30-11:00 Break
11:00-12:00 Discussion, led by Peter Gibbon, Brookhiser essay.
Topic:
- Do you agree with Brookhiser’s emphasis on Washington’s “appearance?”

Preparation for Wednesday: Look at Web site that accompanies Rediscovering George Washington, especially “Washington’s Greatness” and “Appearance and Reality” and “Qualities of Mind and Character” and “Documents.”
www.pbs.org/georgewashington/collection
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<th><strong>Wednesday</strong></th>
<th><strong>Washington in Novels and Films</strong></th>
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<td><strong>July 29</strong></td>
<td>9:00-10:30 Guest speaker: William Martin, “The Novelist’s Perspective.”</td>
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<td><strong>Topic:</strong></td>
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<td>• Compare Pack and Martin documentaries.</td>
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<td>10:30-11:00</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>11:00-11:30</td>
<td>Watch documentary <em>The Man Who Wouldn’t Be King.</em></td>
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<td>11:30-12:30</td>
<td>Continue discussion with Martin.</td>
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<td>12:30-1:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>Meet at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge at 3:30.</td>
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<td>3:00-5:00</td>
<td><strong>Preparation for Thursday:</strong> Read Washington’s letters in handout of readings.</td>
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<th><strong>Thursday</strong></th>
<th><strong>Washington In His Own Words: Part II</strong></th>
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<td><strong>July 30</strong></td>
<td>9:00-10:30 Presentation by Frank Grizzard: “What Washington’s Letters Reveal.”</td>
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<td>10:30-11:00 Break</td>
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<td>11:00-12:30 Small group discussions of Washington’s letters.</td>
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<td><strong>Preparation for Friday:</strong> Read Dorothy Twohig’s, “That Species of Property: Washington’s Role in the Controversy Over Slavery” in <em>George Washington Reconsidered</em>. Read “Reflections,” by Peter Gibbon in handout of readings and “Quotations About History.”</td>
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<th><strong>Friday</strong></th>
<th><strong>History From Below: Part II</strong></th>
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<td><strong>July 31</strong></td>
<td>9:00-10:00 Continue discussion of Zinn’s visit and vision; discuss history quotations as related to Zinn’s visit.</td>
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<td>10:00-10:30 Break</td>
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<td>10:30-12:30 Peter Wright Presentation on websites</td>
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<td>Discussion of August 7 paper.</td>
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<td>11:30-12:00 Discussion, video.</td>
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<td><strong>Topics:</strong></td>
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<td>• What were Washington’s attitudes towards slavery before the war?</td>
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• Why does Henry Wiencek say Washington changed from an ordinary slave owner to a quasi-emancipator?
• Does making slavery more central to a discussion of Washington diminish him?
• Who is more critical of Washington, Twohig or Wiencek?

Preparation for Monday: Think about paper topic. You can prepare a curriculum unit similar to those found on web sites; or write a reaction to a speaker or an assigned reading, e.g., comparing Zinn’s vision to Brookhiser’s vision, or comparing Twohig to Wiencek, or critiquing *Rediscovering George Washington* or *Citizen Washington*. You can write on a larger issue, such as reality vs. mythology or Washington and State Standards. Please present your topic to Peter Wright in the small group meetings.

**Week Three**

**August 3**

**Monday**

9:00-10:30 Washington in American Memory
Guest Speaker: Karal Ann Marling. “George Washington in Memory, or How the Colonial Revivals of the 19th and 20th Centuries Reshaped the Character of Our First President

*Topic:*
• How does Marling say George Washington was represented in 19th century popular culture?

10:30-11:00 Break

11:00-12:00 Karal Ann Marling. “George Washington Today.”

*Topics:*
• Does Marling say we need Washington? What values does he offer Americans?

12:00-1:00 Lunch

1:00-3:00 Discussions of teaching resources and paper topic with Peter Wright.

Preparation for Tuesday: Read Edmund Morgan’s “The Genius of George Washington.”

**Tuesday**

**August 4**

9:00-10:00 Edmund Morgan on Washington’s Genius

Small group discussions of Edmund Morgan’s View of Washington (pp. 3-35) compared to those of Jones, Grizzard, and Smith.
10:00-10:30  Break

10:30-12:00  Discussion continued, Washington’s letters in Morgan, p. 28-87.
\textit{Topic:}
- How do the letters confirm Morgan’s view of Washington as an effective wielder of power?

12:00-1:00  Lunch

\textbf{Preparation for Wednesday. Work on papers.}

\textbf{Wednesday}  \\
\textbf{August 5}  \\
9:00-11:00  Tour Bunker Hill.

11:30-1:00  Tour Dorchester Heights.

1:00-2:30  Lunch in Dorchester.


\textbf{Thursday}  \\
\textbf{August 6}  \\
9:00-10:30  Discuss Briley’s essay with Peter Gibbon and Peter Wright.
\textit{Topics:}
- How does Briley say Washington is portrayed in contemporary American history textbooks?
- How does Washington figure in the culture wars of the 1990s?
- Why is his representation important for the nation’s civic health?

10:30-11:00  Break

11:00-12:30  Discussion, George Washington as reader and educator.
\textit{Topics:}
- What books does Longmore say particularly influenced Washington?
- How did Washington compensate for his lack of formal education?

\textbf{Friday}  \\
\textbf{August 7}  \\
9:00-12:00  Small group discussions of papers.

12:00-2:00  Wrap-up of Institute Themes, Peter Gibbon, Frank Grizzard.