

**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

4:00p.m.

Meet at 10 Buick Street Lobby

6:00-9:00

Working Dinner:
Orientation.

Introduction to Program: Peter Gibbon, Peter Wright
Speaker: Frank Grizzard, "19th Century Portrayals of George Washington."

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

Discussion, led by Peter Gibbon and Frank Grizzard: *George Washington: Ordinary Man, Extraordinary Leader*, by Robert Jones pp. 1-91; Morison, "The Young Man 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

11:00-12:30 Discussion, continued. Jones’ *George Washington*, pp. 92-208.
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

1:30-2:30 Watch the Richard Norton Smith video: *Patriarch: George Washington and the New Nation*.

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?

Preparation for Tuesday: Read W. W. Abbot, “An Uncommon Awareness of Self: The Papers of George Washington” in *George Washington Reconsidered*. Read the Introduction to *George Washington: A Biographical Companion*, by Frank Grizzard. Also, by Grizzard, “Papers,” “Descriptions,” “Education,” “Humor,” “Martha Washington,” in handout Book of readings.

**Tuesday
July 21**

9:00-10:00

The Washington Papers

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.”

Preparation for Wednesday: Read Peter Henriques’ essay “The Final Struggle Between George Washington and the Grim King: Washington’s Attitude Toward Death and Afterlife” in *George Washington Reconsidered*. Read Grizzard, “Religious Beliefs,” in the handout of readings and “Circular to State Governments.” Look at three documents relating to religion on the *Rediscovering George Washington* web site (www.pbs.org/georgewashington/collection): “Letter to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport” and “Letter to the United Baptist Churches in Virginia” and “The First Thanksgiving.” Look at lesson plan: “George Washington and Religious Liberty.”

**Wednesday
July 22**

Washington and Religion and Washington in Cambridge

9:00-10:30

Frank Grizzard and Peter Henriques lecture on Washington’s attitudes on religion and death.

Topic

- Was Washington a Christian? A Stoic? A “warm deist”?

10:30-12:00

Questions for Grizzard and Henriques from institute participants on Washington’s relevance today.

12:00-1:00

Lunch

1:30-4:00 Meet at Longfellow House in Cambridge by 1:30. Tour of Longfellow House, Presentation by Paul Blandford: “A High Purpose and a Fixed Will”—see Handbook of Readings—followed by a tour of Washington’s Cambridge.
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

George Washington and John Adams

Visit to Adams National Historical Park in Quincy, Massachusetts.

1:00-2:00

Working Lunch, Presentation by Dick Ryerson, “John Adams’ view of George Washington.”

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

Washington in His Own Words: Part I

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: Read Washington’s letters in handout of readings.

Week Two

**Monday
July 27**
9:00-10:30

Washington in His Own Words: Part II

Presentation by Frank Grizzard: “What Washington’s Letters Reveal.”

10:30-11:00

Break

11:00-12:30

Small group discussions of Washington's letters.

Preparation for Tuesday: Read from handout of readings six essays: Mason Locke Weems, introduction to *The Life of Washington*; Richard Brookhiser's essay "Man on Horseback"; Frank Grizzard, "George Washington and Nineteenth Century Culture"; Dixon Wecter, "President Washington and Parson Weems"; Daniel Boorstin, "The Mythologizing of George Washington."

**Tuesday
July 28**

The Heroic Washington

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?"

12:00-1:00

Lunch

1:00-3:00

Guest: Speaker: William Martin, *Citizen Washington*.

3:00-4:30

Watch Michael Pack's documentary *Rediscovering George Washington*.

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

**Wednesday
July 29**

Washington in Novels and Films

9:00-10:30

Guest speaker: William Martin, "The Novelist's Perspective."

Topic:

- Compare Pack and Martin documentaries.

10:30-11:00 Break

11:00-11:30 Watch documentary *The Man Who Wouldn't Be King*.

11:30-12:30 Continue discussion with Martin.

12:30-1:30 Lunch

Meet at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge at 3:30.

3:00-5:00 Tour of Mount Auburn Cemetery, Visit to Washington Tower.

Preparation for Thursday: Howard Zinn: *A People's History*, Chapter 4, "Tyranny is Tyranny," and Chapter 5, "A Kind of Revolution."

**Thursday
July 30**

History from Below: Part I

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?

12:00-1:00 Lunch

Preparation for Friday: Read Dorothy Twohig's, "That Species of Property: Washington's Role in the Controversy Over Slavery" in *George Washington Reconsidered*. Read "Reflections," by Peter Gibbon in handout of readings and "Quotations About History."

**Friday
July 31**

History From Below: Part II

9:00-10:00 Discussion of Zinn's visit and vision; discuss history quotations as related to Zinn's visit.

- 10:00-10:30 Break
- 10:30-11:30 Watch C-Span video “An Imperfect God.”
- 11:30-12:00 Discussion, video.
Topics:
- What were Washington’s attitudes towards slavery before the war?
 - 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?
- 12:00-12:30 Discussion of papers due on July 26.

Preparation for Monday: Documents in the handout of readings, “George Washington’s Circular to the States,” George Washington’s Resignation of his Commission to Congress,” “Washington as President of the Convention to the President of Congress,” “Washington’s First Inaugural Address.” Also 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

1:00-2:30 Group A discussions of teaching resources and paper topic with Peter Wright.

2:00-3:00 Group B discussion of teaching resources and paper topic with Peter Wright

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

**Tuesday
August 4** **Edmund Morgan on Washington’s Genius**

9:00-10:00 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.
Topic:

- How do the letters confirm Morgan’s view of Washington as an effective wielder of power?

12:00-1:00 Lunch

1:00-2:00 Group C meeting with Peter Wright to discuss teaching resources and paper topics.

2:00-3:00 Group D meeting with Peter Wright to discuss teaching resources and paper topics.

Preparation for Wednesday. Work on papers.

**Wednesday
August 5** **Washington as Soldier: Bunker Hill and Dorchester Heights**

9:00-11:00 Tour Bunker Hill.

11:30-1:00 Tour Dorchester Heights.

1:00-2:30 Lunch in Dorchester.

Preparation for Thursday: Read Ron Briley’s essay “More Than Just a Slave Holder? George Washington, Adolescence, and American Culture in the 1990s” and Paul K. Longmore’s “The Foundations of Useful Knowledge.” Paper due on Friday.

Thursday
August 6
9:00-10:30

Washington's Legacy and Role in the Classroom

Discuss Briley's essay with Peter Gibbon and Peter Wright.

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.

Topics:

- What books does Longmore say particularly influenced Washington?
- How did Washington compensate for his lack of formal education?

Friday

August 7
9:00-12:00
12:00-2:00

Small group discussions of papers.

Working Lunch: Guest speaker, to be announced—"George Washington's Relevance Today."

Wrap-up of Institute Themes, Peter Gibbon, Frank Grizzard.