

**Proposal for the National Endowment for the Humanities Institute**

**Thomas Jefferson: Personality, Character and Public Life  
July 13-August 8, 2008**

**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.*

**Week One**

**Sunday**

**July 13**

4:00

**Meet in lobby at 10 Buick Street Residence**

6:00-9:00

**Reception and Introductory Dinner**

**Monday**

**July 14**

9:00-9:30

**Jefferson's Character**

Introduction of Program. Preliminary discussion of projects.

9:30-10:30

Discussion led by Peter Gibbon, Richard Bernstein, and Joan Musbach: *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson*, by Joseph Ellis, pp. 1-164.

*Topics:*

Why does Ellis say, "...the filio-pietistic tradition is dead."

Why does Ellis say that we should "discard our need for heroes"?

10:30-11:00

Break

11:00-12:30

Small group discussions: *American Sphinx*, pp. 229-302.

*Topics:*

How does Ellis describe Jefferson as he leaves office?

What does Ellis say is the "historically correct Jeffersonian legacy?"

Discussion of interview with Joseph Ellis in Book of Readings.

*Topics:*

What does Ellis mean by "There are these disjunctions inside Jefferson"?

How does Ellis describe Jefferson physically?

How does Monticello reflect the man?

Why does Ellis describe Jefferson as the first post-modern man?

What does he say about Jefferson's attitude towards women? Sally Hemings?

According to Ellis, why is Jefferson contested and what is his legacy?

12:30-1:30

Lunch

1:30-2:00

Orientation for IT Center

2:00-3:30

Richard Bernstein on his book *Jefferson*.

*Topics:*

Why another book on Thomas Jefferson?

Did your views of Jefferson shift after completing the book?

Why do you say Jefferson biographers must “wrestle with the charge of dishonesty?”

Why do you say “cynicism about politicians spilled over to Jefferson”?

Why did Jefferson believe “the American Revolution was the forerunner of an age of democratic revolution”?

Discuss the evolution of Jefferson’s historical reputation.

Preparation for Tuesday: Review accounts of Election of 1800 in Ellis and Bernstein; read “First Inaugural Address,” pp. 492-496, “Anas [Selections],” 661-696, “Notes on Professor Ebeling’s Letter of July 30, 1798,” 697-701, “A Memorandum (Services to My Country,” 702-704, “Memorandum of Etiquette,” 705, Peterson.

**Tuesday  
July 15**

**Jefferson as Politician**

9:00-9:15

Summary of previous day’s discussions.

9:15-10:30

Joan Musbach: “The Election of 1800”

10:30-11:00

Break

11:00-12:00

Small group exercise with cartoons and documents.

12:00-12:30

Summary, Joan Musbach

12:0-1:30

Lunch

1:30-2:00

Richard Bernstein, “Jefferson as Politician”

2:00-3:00

Watch Ken Burns’s documentary, Part I

2:30-2:45

Break

2:45-3:30

Discussion of documentary, Richard Bernstein

*Topics:*

Why does Jefferson say that to fortify ourselves against misfortunes should be one of the principal studies of mankind? How is Jefferson's "a collector of protégés?" How does this relate to the great man theory of history? How does Burns treat Jefferson as a politician? What is present or missing in this account?

Preparation for Wednesday: Read letters: "An Honest Heart, A Knowing Head," pp. 814-818; "On European Education," pp. 837-840; "Education of a Future Son-in-Law," pp. 860-864; "The Grand Recipe for Felicity," pp. 896-897; "The Homage of Reason," pp. 900-905; "Reading the Law," pp. 966-968; "Freedom of Mind," pp. 1063; "Education of a Grandson," pp. 1193-1197; "Female Education," pp. 1411-1413; "Habits of a Hard Student," pp. 1416-1417; "Counsel to a Namesake," pp. 1499-1500. List ten points that Jefferson makes about education.

**Wednesday  
July 16**

9:00-10:30

**Jefferson's Letters: Education**

Gibbon leads discussion of Jefferson's letters: education.

*Topic:*

What role should education play in improving personal life and civic culture?

How, according to Jefferson, was Europe dangerous to young students?

How were women to be educated?

10:30-11:00

Break

11:00-12:00

Small group discussions.

*Topic:*

What relevance do Jefferson's views on education have for us today?

12:00-12:30

Insights from small group discussion.

12:30-1:30

Lunch

1:30-2:30

Richard Bernstein "The Intellectual World of Thomas Jefferson."

Preparation for Thursday: On the Ken Burns Web site there are twenty-four interviews that include a wealth of information and a variety of opinions. Read Wills, Vidal, Burstein, and Peterson

interviews (these are also in the Book of Readings.) Write a one-page summary and reaction to one of the *other* interviews on the site to present on Thursday. What was new, interesting, original about the interview? The interviews will be listed under “Archives” on the PBS Burns web site.

**Thursday  
July 17**

**Current versus Contemporary Views of Jefferson**

9:00-10:30

Presentation of “interview” papers in small groups.

10:30-11:00

Break

11:00-12:30

Presentation of small group interviews to entire group.

12:30-1:30

Lunch

1:30-2:30

Joan Musbach, “Thomas Jefferson and the Barbary Pirates”

Preparation for Friday: Look at web site “Thomas Jefferson Papers,” an Electronic Archive on the MHS web site.

**Friday  
July 18**

**Jefferson and the Massachusetts Historical Society**

9:00-9:30

Meet at Buick Street residence for walk to the Massachusetts Historical Society

9:30-10:30

Presentation by Peter Drummey: “Jefferson the Man.”

*Topics:*

Drummey’s views on the connection between the private and public man.

Jefferson’s architectural drawings in the Coolidge Collection.

10:30-11:00

Break

11:00-12:00

Presentation on Jefferson Papers

12:00-12:30

Tour of MHS.

12:30-1:30

Lunch

Preparation for Monday: Read Appleby's "Without Resolution: The Jeffersonian Tension in American Nationalism" in *Book of Readings*.

## Week Two

### Monday

July 21

9:00-10:30

### Jefferson as President

Guest Speaker: Joyce Appleby: "The End of Hierarchy: The Psychology of Democracy."

*Topics:*

How does Jefferson, according to Appleby, reconcile his belief in the ordinary man with his veneration of greatness?

How, according to Appleby, does Jefferson's own psychology contribute to "a psychology for a democratic people?"

Jefferson's private life as a factor in the 1800 and 1804 elections.

10:30-11:00

Break

11:00-12:00

Discussion

*Topics:*

How does Jefferson share the "prejudice of his peers" with respect to women and race?

Why does Appleby suggest "Scholars are loathe to credit a single individual with responsibility for momentous social changes?"

What does Appleby mean by Jefferson's "assault on formality"?

12:00-12:45

Lunch

12:45-2:00

Appleby: "Politics of Memory."

Preparation for Tuesday: Read Lewis' interview in Book of Readings. Read Lewis' "The White Jeffersons" (handout). Read "Advice to a Young Daughter," pp. 781-782; "A Single Event," pp. 780-781; "More Advice," pp. 784-785; "The Empty Bustle of Paris," pp. 887-889; "A Scolding Letter," pp. 970-971; "Whippoorwills and Strawberries," pp. 968-969; "To Be Loved by Every Body," p.1102.

### Tuesday

July 22

9:00-10:30

### Jefferson as Family Man

Jan Lewis: "The Private Jefferson."

*Topics:*

Why does Lewis believe that family history should be an integral part of American history?

How does Jefferson's family life intersect with American history?

Why does Lewis title a recent article “The Blessings of Domestic Society?”

10:30-11:00

Break

11:00-12:00

Discussion

*Topics:*

Jefferson on the meaning of “pursuit of happiness.”

Jefferson’s attitudes towards women.

12:00-1:00

Lunch

1:00-2:30

Discuss assigned letters with Jan Lewis.

Preparation for Wednesday: Read correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. Letters: “Reconciliation,” pp. 1258-1260; “Hope in the Head...Fear Astern,” pp. 1381-1384; “The Natural Aristocracy,” pp. 1304-1310; “Calvin and Cosmology,” pp. 1466-1469; “Bonaparte and Plato,” pp. 1339-1343; “The Best Letter,” pp. 1479-1481.

**Wednesday  
July 23**

**Jefferson and Adams**

8:00

Leave for Adams National Historic Park

9:00-11:30

Tour of Adams National Historical Park.

11:30-12:30

Presentation: Letters between Abigail Adams and Thomas Jefferson.

12:30-1:30

Working lunch. Discussion of Letters

*Topics:*

What are the fundamental differences between the world views of Adams and Jefferson?

What do the letters reveal about Jefferson’s temperament?

2:00-2:30

Visit to Quincy church.

Preparation for Thursday: “Notes on the State of Virginia,” pp. 283-287; “A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom,” pp. 346-347; “I Have Sworn Upon the Altar of God,” pp. 1080-1082; “Jesus, Socrates, and Others,” pp. 1120-1122; “The Morals of Jesus,” pp. 1122-1126; “Never an Infidel, If Never a Priest,” pp. 1403-1405; “Jesus and the Jews,” pp. 1435-14; “A Unitarian Creed,” pp. 1458-1459; “Religion and the University,” pp. 1463-1466; “The Homage of Reason,” pp. 900-905.

**Thursday  
July 24**

9:00-10:30

**Jefferson and Religion**

Gibbon and Bernstein lead discussion of Jefferson's letters and statements on religion.

*Topics:*

How did Jefferson's religious views illuminate his personality?

Why was Jefferson so hostile to religious establishments?

How are the issues Jefferson raises relevant to religion today? To the contemporary discussion about the relationship between church and state?

10:30-11:00

Break

11:00-12:00

Continue discussion.

*Topics:*

What are Jefferson's views of Jesus? The Jews?

What does he think of John Calvin? Of Quakers?

12:00-1:30

Lunch

**Friday:  
July 25**

9:00-10:00

**Jefferson in the Classroom: Part One**

Joan Musbach: "Resources for the K-12 Classroom."

10:00-10:30

Peter Gibbon on bibliography and history quotations (in Book of Readings).

10:30-11:00

Break

11:00-12:00

Richard Bernstein on content and use of Jefferson web sites.

12:00-1:00

Small group meetings by lower/middle/upper grade levels for discussion of paper topics.

Sign up for Saturday field trip, then free for the rest of the day.

**Saturday  
July 26**

9:00

**Optional Field Trip to Salem and Peabody Museum**

Leave Buick Street Residence for field trip.

Preparation for Monday. Read from Writings: Thomas Jefferson. Notes, pp. 288-289; 264-270; "A Fire Bell in the Night," pp. 1443-1445; and "A Plan of Emancipation," pp. 1484-1487; "Hope for Our Black Brethren," pp. 982-983; "African Colonization," pp. 1096-1099; "Nune Dimittis on Slavery," pp. 1516; Emancipation

and the Younger Generation,” pp. 1343-1346; “The Negro Race,” p. 1202; “On American Degeneracy,” pp. 799-802.

### Week Three

**Monday  
July 28**

#### **Jefferson: Race and Slavery**

9:00-10:30

Guest speaker: Peter Onuf, “To Declare Them A Free And Independent People.”

10:30--11:00

Break

11:00-12:00

Discussion

*Topics:*

How and why did Jefferson’s attitudes towards slavery change?

The appeal of colonization and diffusion.

Jefferson’s attitudes towards Native Americans.

12:00-1:00

Lunch

1:00-2:30

Watch with Peter Onuf *Jefferson’s Blood*.

Preparation for Tuesday: Work on curriculum projects.

**Tuesday  
July 29**

#### **Jefferson’s Legacy**

9:00-10:30

Guest Speaker: Peter Onuf, “Thomas Jefferson’s Changing Reputation and Impact on America Today.”

10:30-11:00

Break

11:00-12:00

Discussion

*Topics:*

Onuf’s critique of Joseph Ellis and David McCullough.

Merrill Peterson’s refusal to discuss Jefferson’s character.

Jefferson’s legacy.

12:00-1:00

Lunch

1:00-3:00

Work on curriculum projects.

Preparation for Wednesday: Chapter 1 of Edwin Martin’s *Thomas Jefferson: Scientist*. (Book of Handouts) Read letters: “A True Whig in Science,” pp. 762-764; “Hot-Air Balloons,” pp. 794-797; “Climate and American Character,” pp. 826-828; “Science and Liberty,” pp. 947-949; “Freedom of Mind,” pp. 1063-1066;

“Instructions to Captain Lewis,” pp. 1126-1132; “A Tribute of Gratitude,” pp. 1162-1163; “Civilization of the Indians,” pp. 1113-1117.

**Wednesday  
July 30**

**Jefferson as Scientist**

9:00-10:30

Guest Speaker Rob Cox on “Thomas Jefferson: The Leonardo of America”

10:30-11:00

Break

11:00-12:00

Discussion: How do Jefferson’s scientific interests and accomplishments help us understand his character?

*Topics:*

Jefferson’s Inventions

Jefferson's Scientific Correspondence

Jefferson and Farming

Jefferson and Medicine

Jefferson and Lewis and Clark

12:30-1:30

Lunch

1:30-4:00

Meetings with Joan Musbach to refine curriculum projects.

Preparation for Thursday: “Take Care of Me When Dead,” pp. 1512-1515. In handout: “Introduction” to *Principle and Interest*, by Herbert Sloan.

**Thursday  
July 31**

**Jefferson and Money**

9:00-10:30

Guest speaker: Herbert E. Sloan on “Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Debt.”

10:30-11:00

Break

11:00-12:00

Discussion

*Topics:*

Jefferson’s attitude towards spending.

Jefferson’s plans to make money.

Money and its relationship to Jefferson’s philosophy and personality.

Money in Jefferson’s final years.

12:00-1:00

Lunch

1:00-3:00 Work on curriculum projects. Due on Friday, August 1.

**Friday  
August 1**

**Jefferson in the Classroom: Part Two**

9:00-10:30

Small Group Discussions on Projects

*Topics:*

Biography and K-12 students; how to present the inner life.

Jefferson in an American history centered on race and slavery; how to present Sally Hemings.

Jefferson and his relation to state standards and high stakes testing.

Jefferson as exemplary life.

10:30-11:00

Break

11:30-12:0

Video to be announced.

12:30-1:30

Orientation for trip to Monticello.

Free for the afternoon.

**Week Four**

**Sunday  
August 3**

**Travel to Charlottesville to visit Monticello**

7:45 a.m.

Depart from Buick Street, departure time to be announced.

3:00

Check-in at UVA housing.

Orientation to Charlottesville and UVA, Peter Wright.

5:15

Bus departs for Monticello\*

6:00-7:30

Tour of Monticello

7:30-8:00

Bus pick-up for Charlottesville

Free for Dinner

*\*You may want to bring a snack to eat on the bus, as we will not be free for dinner until we get back to Charlottesville around 8 o'clock.*

Preparation for Monday: "Farming," pp. 1018-1022; "Gardens for Monticello," pp. 1166-1169; Peter Hatch's "Introduction" to *Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book*. Read interview with Peter Hatch in Book of Readings.

**Monday  
August 4**

**Architecture and Gardens**

9:00-10:30	Guest speaker Peter Hatch. “Thomas Jefferson: Gardener.”
10:30-11:00	Break
11:00-12:00	The Changes at Monticello
12:00-12:30	Bus pick -up to Monticello
12:30-2:00	Working Lunch at Michie Tavern Lunch Speaker: Peter Hatch
2:30-4:00	Garden tour.
4:00-5:00	Free Time
5:00	Bus pick-up for return to Charlottesville
	Free for Dinner
	<u>Preparation for Tuesday:</u> Read Lucia Stanton interview, Stanton’s “Free Some Day,” and Neiman’s “Unearthing Secret America,” all three in the Book of Readings

**Tuesday  
August 5**

**Archaeology and Slavery**

8:30-10:30	Guest speaker: Fraser Neiman. “Archaeology at Monticello.”
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-12:00	Discussion, Fraser Neiman
12:00-1:00	Working Lunch at UVA.
1:00	Bus pick up to go to Monticello.
2:00-4:00	PlantationTour
4:00	Bus pick-up to return to Charlottesville
	Free for dinner.

Preparation for Wednesday: Read Poplar Forest articles in Book of Readings.

**Wednesday  
August 6**

**Jefferson’s Retreat: Poplar Forest**

- 9:00 Bus pick-up for trip to Poplar Forest.
- 11:00-12:30 Guest speaker: Travis McDonald.
- 12:30-1:30 Working Lunch with Travis McDonald.  
Guest speaker: Diane Kinney. "Jefferson's Family."
- 1:30-3:00 Free to explore grounds and archeology lab.
- 3:00 Bus departs for Charlottesville
- Free for dinner.
- Preparation for Thursday: A Gentleman's Library, pp. 740-744.
- Thursday**  
**August 7**
- 9:30-11:30 **The Jefferson Papers**  
Guest speaker Jeff Looney, Editor-in-Chief of *Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series*. "Editing Jefferson in Retirement."
- 11:30-11:45 Break
- Working Lunch  
Guest Speakers: Lisa Francavilla, Managing Editor of the *Jefferson Papers*.  
Peter Gibbon: Institute Wrap-up: "Insights, Themes, Applications."
- Afternoon free
- Friday**  
**August 8** **Return to Boston for Flights Home.**

[Return to Thomas Jefferson: Personality, Character and Public Life](#)