



National Humanities Center



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[Live, Online Seminars for
History and Literature teachers](#)

[SPRING 2010](#)

For Free Registration

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The National Humanities Center is pleased to present live, online professional development seminars for History and Literature teachers. These seminars are content-based and require close reading of historical documents, literary texts, and works of art. We offer teachers new materials and fresh ideas for teaching with primary source materials. All seminar resources are free and online. Join these innovative, interactive seminars led by leading scholars and engage with teachers from all over the country.

READING ASSIGNMENTS: Seminar texts are provided free online at the National Humanities Center's [Toolbox Library](#) and [TeacherServe®](#) websites. Prior to each seminar, reading assignments will be made available to participants.

RECERTIFICATION CREDIT: The National Humanities Center programs have applied for MSDE CPD, approval is pending. Five seminars equal 15 hours or 1 MSDE CPD. Each seminar includes ninety minutes of instruction and approximately two hours of preparation. The Center will supply documentation of participation.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS: The seminars are conducted online using conferencing software. To participate, you need a computer, an internet connection, speakers, and a microphone.

SPONSOR: The National Humanities Center, located in North Carolina's Research Triangle Park, is the country's only independent institute for advanced study in all branches of the humanities. Since 1984, it has been offering rigorous, content-based professional development programs for high school teachers.

Deism and the Founding of the United States

During the 17th and 18th centuries, many “freethinking” Europeans embraced Deism, a theology that subjected religious truth to the authority of human reason. In colonial America, Deism found few adherents, but those who were attracted to it tended to be wealthy and educated, leaders in colonial society and politics. Today, debate swirls around the role deism played in the founding of the nation. What was this “religion of nature”? How can we explain it to students? Who among the Founders were Deists? What influence did Deism have on the culture of the new nation?

Leader: Ryan Smith
Assistant Professor of History, Virginia Commonwealth University

Date: Thursday Jan. 28, 2010
Time: 7:00-8:30 p.m. (EST)

Rethinking Booker T. and W.E.B.

In one lesson plan after another Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois forever stand opposed. In the late nineteenth century both sought uplift for African Americans, but one believed it came through accommodation and manual training, while the other urged resistance and the liberal arts. Is that the entire story? Was Washington a narrow, uncreative booster of commercialism or a savvy politician who correctly read what late nineteenth-century America would afford its black citizens? Was Du Bois a heroic intellectual activist or a narrow elitist whose path to uplift was open only to the “Talented Tenth”?

Leader: Kenneth R. Janken
Professor, African and Afro-American Studies
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Date: Thursday Feb. 4, 2010
Time: 7:00-8:30 p.m. (EST)

The Idea of Progress in the 19th Century

The United States marked its 100th anniversary in 1876 with the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, a birthday party that celebrated mechanical progress. But in late nineteenth-century America, progress did not simply mean generating more horsepower. It meant cleaning up cities, reforming government, improving the efficiency of workers, and professionalizing endeavors like playing baseball and studying history. The idea of progress reached into every corner of American life. How did Americans define progress at that time? How did progress manifest itself? And how did it shape America?

Leader: Henry Binford
Associate Professor of History, Northwestern University

Date: Thursday Feb. 18, 2010
Time: 7:00-8:30 p.m. (EST)

Picturing America in the 1930s: Reading Farm Security Administration Photographs

The Farm Security Administration (FSA) was a New Deal agency founded to combat rural poverty. While it spent millions of dollars between 1935 and 1946 to improve the lives of poor farmers, it is remembered today for its documentary photography program. The photographs of rural America taken by FSA photographers in the 1930s have assumed iconic status and have come to define the look of the Great Depression. What can they teach about America in the 1930s? What can they tell us about the truth of documentary photography? How can we read them as images?

Leader: Anthony W. Lee
Associate Professor of Art, Mount Holyoke College

Date: Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2010
Time: 7:00-8:30 p.m. (EST)

The Role of the West in the Reunification of the US after the Civil War

When we teach Reconstruction, we typically focus on the struggle to reunite the North and the South. But what of the West? What role did it play in national reunification? The late nineteenth century was the zenith of westward expansion. Western images dominated American culture. What did the wide-open spaces of the West represent to the Americans who were crowding into the cities of the Northeast? What did they represent to the ex-Confederates who resented the imposition of federal power in the South? How did the West shape the nation that emerged from the Civil War?

Leader: Heather Cox Richardson
Professor of History, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Date: Thursday Feb. 25, 2010
Time: 7:00-8:30 p.m. (EST)

Walt Whitman's Civil War Poetry An American Experience Seminar



Reflecting on the Civil War in 1892, Walt Whitman concluded, "The real war will never get in the books." But Whitman did try to bring the real war into his poems. An anti-slavery Democrat, who dressed the wounds of both Northern and Southern soldiers, Whitman wrote poems that describe the circumstances of war—from the exuberant optimism of 1861 to the blood-soaked exhaustion of 1865. How did he interpret the slaughter and sacrifice of the Civil War? How can we bring students to the "the real war" through his poems? This seminar is a collaboration between the National Humanities Center and public television's historical documentary film series *American Experience*. Participants will view the *American Experience* film *Walt Whitman* and explore how to use it in the classroom.

Leader: Franny Nudelman
Associate Professor of English, Carleton University

Date: Thursday Mar. 18, 2010
Time: 7:00-8:30 p.m. (EST)

Hamilton's America-Jefferson's America An American Experience Seminar



Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson offered distinct visions for the nation they were founding—one urban and industrial, the other rural and agrarian. In twenty-first-century America, a nation of cities and commerce, it is easy to think Hamilton won. But did he? How did the two visions clash in eighteenth-century America? What were their origins, and what have they meant for the United States? This seminar is a collaboration between the National Humanities Center and public television's historical documentary series *American Experience*. Participants will view the *American Experience* film *Alexander Hamilton* and explore how to use it in the classroom.

Leader: Peter Onuf
Thomas Jefferson Professor of History, University of Virginia

Date: Wednesday Mar. 24, 2010
Time: 7:00-8:30 p.m. (EST)