

**National Endowment for the Humanities Institute**  
**Thomas Jefferson: Personality, Character and Public Life**  
**Project Period: October 1, 2012 – December 31, 2013**

**Syllabus: Updated 6/28/2013**

*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 7**

4:00

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

6:00-9:00

**Reception and Introductory Dinner**

**Monday**

**July 8**

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 <i>Jefferson</i> . <i>Topics:</i> 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.
	<u>Preparation for Tuesday:</u> Review accounts of Election of 1800 in Ellis and Bernstein; read “First Inaugural Address,” pp. 492-496,
<b>Tuesday July 9</b>	<b>Jefferson as President</b>
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
12:30-1:30	Lunch
1:30-2:00	Richard Bernstein, “Jefferson as President”
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 <i>Topics:</i> 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 10**

**Jefferson’s Letters: Education**

9:00-10:30

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, and original about the interview? The interviews will be listed under “Archives” on the PBS Burns web site.

**Thursday  
July 11**

**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 12**

**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 Freeman, Introduction and Prologue in Book of Readings.

**Week Two**

**Monday  
July 15**

**Political Parties in the New Nation: Jefferson and Hamilton**

9:00-10:30

Guest Speaker: Joanne Freeman on “Jefferson and Hamilton.”

*Topics:*

Why does Freeman say that honor and reputation were so important to members of the First Congress?

10:30-11:00	Break
11:00-12:00	Discussion <i>Topics:</i> Why does Freeman say it is “difficult for us to recapture the contingency of this historical moment”? Why does Jefferson say “The life and soul of history must forever be unknown”?
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:30	Freeman, Dueling as Politics: Hamilton v. Burr  <u>Preparation for Tuesday:</u> Read selections indicated in Book of Readings.

**Tuesday  
July 16**

9:00-10:30	Philosophers of Education: Peter Gibbon <i>Topics:</i> What is Jefferson’s attitude towards history?
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10:30-11:00 Break

11:00-12:00 Discussion of History Quotations

12:00-1:00 Lunch

1:00-2:30 Richard Bernstein: Jefferson as Seen by His Contemporaries

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 17**

8:00 Leave for Adams National Historic Park

9:00-12:30 Tour of Adams National Historical Park.

12:30-1:30	<p>Working lunch. Discussion of Letters, Richard Bernstein</p> <p><i>Topics:</i></p> <p>What are the fundamental differences between the worldviews of Adams and Jefferson?</p> <p>What do the letters reveal about Jefferson’s temperament?</p>
2:00-2:30	<p>Visit to Quincy church.</p> <p><u>Preparation for Thursday:</u> “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.</p>
<b>Thursday July 18</b>	<b>Jefferson and Religion</b>
9:00-10:30	<p>Gibbon and Bernstein lead discussion of Jefferson’s letters and statements on religion.</p> <p><i>Topics:</i></p> <p>How did Jefferson’s religious views illuminate his personality?</p> <p>Why was Jefferson so hostile to religious establishments?</p> <p>How are the issues Jefferson raises relevant to religion today? To the contemporary discussion about the relationship between church and state?</p>
10:30-11:00	Break
11:00-12:00	<p>Continue discussion.</p> <p><i>Topics:</i></p> <p>What are Jefferson’s views of Jesus? The Jews?</p> <p>What does he think of John Calvin? Of Quakers?</p>
12:00-1:30	Lunch
<b>Friday: July 19</b>	<b>Jefferson in the Classroom: Part One</b>
9:00-10:00	Joan Musbach: “Resources for the K-12 Classroom.”
10:00-10:30	Peter Gibbon and Richard Bernstein on bibliography.
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.

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 22**

#### **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 23**

#### **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: “Farming,” p. 1018 to 1022; “Gardens for Monticello,” p. 1166 to 1169; Peter Hatch’s Introduction to *Thomas Jefferson’s Garden Book*. Read Interview with Peter Hatch in *Book of Readings*.

**Wednesday  
July 24**

**Jefferson and Monticello**

9:00-10:30 Guest Speaker Peter Hatch on “Thomas Jefferson and Monticello”

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 Virtual Tour of Monticello website.

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

**Thursday  
July 25**

**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, July 26
<b>Friday July 26</b>	<b>Jefferson in the Classroom: Part Two</b>
9:00-10:30	Small Group Discussions on Projects
10:30-11:00	Break
11-12:30	<i>Topics:</i> 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.
12:30-1:30:	Working Lunch: Institute Wrap-Up.