

# ENCOUNTERING JOHN ADAMS: BOSTON AND BRAINTREE



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

## A Letter from the Directors

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Dear Colleague,

We invite you to apply for a weeklong NEH Landmarks workshop, *Encountering John Adams: Braintree and Boston*. Two sessions are available: the first is from July 12-18, 2009; the second is from July 19-25, 2009. The workshop is collaboration between the Boston College Political Science Department and the Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS). Participants will stay at Boston College and do primary document research at one or both of two locations: the MHS, which houses the letters of John, Abigail, and John Quincy Adams; and/or the Boston Public Library (BPL), which has John Adams' library. There will also be visits to the Adams National Historic Park, which includes the houses in which John Adams was born, grew up, and spent his retirement years; to Boston's Freedom Trail, which encompasses many of the most important places involved in the planning and early outbreak of the American Revolution; and to the Massachusetts Archives, which houses some of the most important documents in the nation's history, including Massachusetts' copy of the Bill of Rights and the copy of the 1780 Massachusetts Constitution, drafted by John Adams, that was sent for comment to all of the Commonwealth's towns.

This is the third time that we have offered this program. It has enjoyed great success and we are eagerly looking forward to encountering John Adams again this summer.

### **Theme**

The workshop seeks to understand John Adams' thoughts and actions on his own

terms, to see American life and politics as he saw it. Participants will delve deeply into his writings and the responses to his letters in order to frame their own understanding of the man, the statesman, and the political thinker. They will spend much of their time conducting their own archival research, using original documents. They will read the Massachusetts Constitution; climb Penn's Hill and look out at Boston Harbor from the same spot where Abigail Adams watched the battle of Bunker Hill and described it in letters to her husband; sit in the small kitchen in which John hosted meetings of revolutionary leaders; read the original letters that John and Abigail wrote to one another, and to others; examine the books that John Adams collected during his long life, and even read the comments he wrote in the margins, as he conversed with the authors whose work most engaged his intellect.

## **Structure and Content**

The workshop is divided into four units each covering a crucial stage of Adams' public life: 1) as a lawyer and political activist in Colonial Massachusetts; 2) as a leader of the American Revolution; 3) as a drafter of the Massachusetts Constitution, and theorist of constitutional democracy; and 4) as President, and as author and correspondent during his post-presidential years. Lectures and seminars by, and conferences with, historians and political scientists will supplement and amplify the hands-on learning at the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Boston Public Library, and the visits to the Adams National Historic Park, Boston's Freedom Trail, and the Massachusetts Archives.

Associate Director Professor Dennis Hale will lead the seminars. Dennis teaches both American Political Thought and the American Founding and is therefore deeply interested in and knowledgeable about John Adams' writings. He is currently finishing a book on the history and development of the jury system. Marc Landy is the workshop director. Marc has been teaching at Boston College for more than thirty years. His main fields of scholarly interest are American Political Development and the American Presidency. He and Sidney Milkis wrote *Presidential Greatness* and an introductory textbook, *American Government: Balancing Democracy and Rights*. He is also the Faculty Chair of Boston College's Irish Institute in which capacity he develops curriculum for and teaches groups of politicians, educators, public officials and journalists who come to BC from both Ireland and Northern Ireland.

## **Getting Ready**

Prospective applicants are encouraged to visit the website of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and to examine the extensive collection of primary documents that are available online. Think about how you might use these resources, and those available at the Boston Public Library Adams Collection, to shape an individual project that will enhance your own teaching or research interests. Perhaps you would like to use the letters to teach about the Revolution, or the constitutional debates. The letters might be useful in portraying the Adams marriage, or in examining Abigail's own political views and their possible influence on her husband. The letters might teach something about the social manners of the 18th century, or the harsh conditions of a New England winter before the age

of central heating and antibiotics. Or the books in the Adams collection at the Boston Public Library might provide clues to the intellectual influences that shaped John Adams' thought. Did he read Shakespeare? The Greeks? Machiavelli? Once you are able to look at the books, you might discover in Adams' marginalia further clues to the development of his ideas.

In your application essay, please let us know how you might use these resources. We understand, of course, that until you have been able to work with the materials directly, it will not be possible to provide extensive detail about your project, and that once you have seen the materials your project might change. That will be entirely acceptable.

Applicants who are selected for the Workshops will be able to converse with MHS Librarian Peter Drummey via email, seeking his advice about how to proceed with their projects once they have arrived in Boston. This will help them make the most of their time here. During the first visit to the MHS, participants will have a chance to discuss their proposals with Mr. Drummey. Time is allotted during each of the next three days for participants to return to the MHS, or go to the Boston Public Library, to continue to work on their projects with full access to the MHS and BPL staffs.

Participants are encouraged to share their finished projects with the Project Directors, and with Peter Drummey at the MHS, especially if they would like some feedback on their work. With participants' permission, we will also post finished projects on our website.

## **Living Arrangements**

Boston College is located a trolley ride away from downtown Boston in the lovely residential community of Chestnut Hill. The campus is quiet, pleasant, and safe. Participants will be housed in air-conditioned dormitory suites at Boston College. The suites are composed of either two or four bedrooms sharing a common living area that has a refrigerator and a sink but no stove, plates or microwave. There is one bathroom for every two bedrooms. Each bedroom has two beds. You may choose to either share a bedroom with another person or have your own bedroom. Rates are \$69 per person per night, for a single room in a suite; and \$50 per person per night, for a double room in a suite. The suites are nicely appointed but provide only basic accommodations: sheets, two towels, a blanket, and a pillow. There are no bedside reading lamps. There is a Boston College dining hall, Corcoran Commons, across the street from the dormitory.

Because the Boston area is so rich in restaurants, participants can make their own lunch and dinner plans. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are all available at Corcoran Commons, although most lunches will be eaten near the sites where we will be working. For dinner, participants will be able to use the BC dining hall, or restaurants in downtown Boston (with easy access to public transportation back to the campus), or downtown Newton, which is a short cab ride away from campus.

All BC dorms have access to the Internet. Boston College is easily accessible to downtown Boston and Cambridge by public transportation. You will have your

evenings free to rest, catch up on your reading, or explore Boston and Cambridge. You will have library privileges while you are here, which means you will also be able to use the library's extensive digital archives from your dorm room.

## **Eligibility**

We welcome applications from community college faculty in any academic discipline as well as from librarians and adjunct faculty. Adjunct and part-time lecturers as well as full-time faculty are eligible to apply. An applicant need not have an advanced degree in order to qualify. Candidates for degrees are only eligible to apply if they are employed by an institution other than the one at which they are a degree candidate, and if their participation is intended to enhance their teaching of American undergraduates. Applicants must be American citizens, residents of U.S. jurisdictions, or foreign nationals who have been residing in the United States or its territories for at least the three years immediately preceding the application deadline. Foreign nationals teaching abroad are not eligible to apply.

Applicants must complete the NEH application and provide all of the information requested in order to be considered eligible. **An individual may apply to and participate in a maximum of two (2) workshops. Past or present participation in the NEH Summer Seminars and Institutes programs does not affect an individual's eligibility to participate in Landmarks programs.**

## **Amount of award**

Participants will receive a \$750 stipend to defray the costs of travel, lodging, books, and food; an additional travel subsidy will be available on a case-by-case basis. Stipends will be paid after the program has ended.

## **Applying**

There are four components to the application:

1. The Application cover sheet. It is available online at <http://www.neh.gov/online/education/participants/>
  1. One copy submitted electronically to NEH
  2. *Three hard copies* submitted by mail to the Associate Project Director, Dennis Hale (address below). *Only applications mailed to the Associate Director can be considered. Submitting the Application Cover Sheet to the NEH site does not constitute a complete application.*
2. Perhaps the most important part of the completed application is an essay of one to two double-spaced pages. This essay should include information about your professional background and interest in the subject of the workshop; your special perspectives, skills, or experiences that would contribute to the workshop; and how the experience would enhance your teaching or school service.
3. Your resume. Please include a resume or CV detailing your educational

qualifications and professional experience.

4. Additionally, you will need to submit a letter of recommendation from your department chair/division head or another professional reference. It is helpful for referees to read a copy of the description of the Adams Workshops contained in this Letter. Please enclose your letter of recommendation, with the author's name signed across the back of the sealed envelope, with your application package. *Do not send letters of reference separately to the Project Director.*

Please collate and staple your application in the following order: cover sheet, essay, resume, and letter of recommendation. **NB: SUBMIT THREE COPIES OF THE COMPLETED APPLICATION - COVER SHEET, ESSAY, RESUME, AND RECOMMENDATION - TO:**

**DENNIS HALE  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
BOSTON COLLEGE  
140 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE  
CHESTNUT HILL, MA 02467**

Your completed application must be postmarked no later than **March 16, 2009**. Successful candidates will be notified by April 15, 2009, and will have until April 22, 2009, to accept or decline the offer. Those not accepted initially will be put on a waiting list and will be offered acceptance as space becomes available. There is room for 25 participants in each of the two sessions.

**Endowment programs do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age.** For further information, write to NEH Equal Opportunity Officer, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20506. TDD: 202/606-8282 (this is a special telephone device for the deaf).