

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

The U.S. at 250:

Teaching the Declaration of Independence

SUNY Potsdam / BOCES

Social Studies Professional
Development Workshop

November 10, 2025

In honor of the upcoming 250th anniversary of the American Revolution and the signing of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, schools and communities across the United States are once again celebrating our revolutionary heritage and considering how it can guide us in forging “A More Perfect Union.”

This workshop at SUNY Potsdam will offer teachers in the North Country strategies for integrating revolutionary history into secondary and middle-school social studies classrooms. Please join us for a day of learning and networking with professionals in the fields of History, Anthropology, English, and Education.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide local teachers with a wider understanding of our campus and its student and faculty life. SUNY Potsdam provides students with applied learning experience where hands on and direct application of learned skills is acquired and executed.

Our Social Studies Professional Development Workshop will have teachers engaged and absorbed with hands-on learning workshops provided by Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education Professors.



Workshop Schedule

8:00 – 8:30 a.m. Registration

(Lougheed Learning Commons, center of campus)

8:30 – 8:50 a.m. Overview and Welcome

(coffee and snacks will be provided)

Note: session room details will be available on Nov. 10th

Session 1: 9:00 – 9:50 a.m.



Dr. Sheila McIntyre (SUNY Potsdam History Department)

Protecting the Revolution from the "Despotic Tyranny" of the Constitution

Not everyone in Revolutionary America approved of the new Constitution; in fact, many argued that it destroyed the liberties gained by winning Independence from Great Britain. This class will explore Mercy Otis Warren's vociferous condemnation of the Constitution. You will leave class with texts you can use to teach your students about the Antifederalists, women in the early Republic, and how to apply Warren's 1788 publication to the problems of 2025 America.

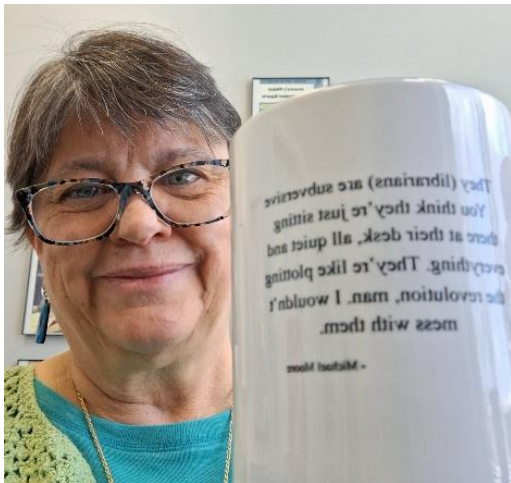
Session 1: 9:00 – 9:50 a.m. (cont.)



Dr. Thomas Baker (SUNY Potsdam History Department)

Drafting the Declaration

This interactive workshop offers a way to teach the Declaration of Independence by examining how it was drafted (and by whom), and by challenging students to assess its continued relevance and, perhaps, draft it anew. You'll go home with practical ideas about how to infuse civic education into historical study.



Lauren Jackson-Beck (Associate Librarian, SUNY Potsdam)

Free Library and Archival Resources

Free library resources for teaching the foundational documents of American Democracy will be highlighted. These include authoritative websites and library access that students and teachers can use to learn more about the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. Sources for accessing freely available information will be shared in a Google document along with instructions for access.

Session 2: 10:00 – 10:50 a.m.



Dr. Libbie Freed (SUNY Potsdam History Department)

The U.S. Declaration of Independence and Global History

How were ideals expressed in the American Revolution relevant in the 19th and 20th centuries and in widely differing settings, from colonization and nationalism to decolonization and the Cold War? In this session we'll consider ways to use the U.S. Declaration of Independence to connect to global history.



Dr. Gaylynn Welch (SUNY Potsdam History Department)

The Declaration of Independence and Women's Rights

Most textbooks identify the 1848 convention at Seneca Falls as the origin of the women's rights movement and the Declaration of Sentiments as its founding statement. Using resources from the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, we'll consider Elizabeth Cady Stanton's and Sojourner Truth's views of the American Revolution, nineteenth-century black conventions, as well as ways the Seneca Falls origin story limits our understanding of women's rights. You'll

learn about online lesson plans and resources from museums, historical societies, and libraries that focus on women's rights in New York State.



Dr. Hadley Kruczek-Aaron (SUNY Potsdam Anthropology Department), and the SUNY Potsdam HEARTH

Revolutionary Recipes

Note: This session runs 10am – noon. Participants will be cooking with fire. Please dress in long pants and closed-toed shoes, and avoid long, draping fabric.

Workshop participants will work at HEARTH (SUNY Potsdam's on-campus experimental archaeology and heritage craft laboratory) to recreate recipes made by James Hemings and other enslaved chefs at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. The workshop will offer opportunities for teachers and students to consider the ways that food can be a gateway to understanding the social, political, and cultural dynamics of 18th-century America.

Session 3: 11:00 – 11:50 a.m.



Dr. James Donahue (SUNY Potsdam English Department)

***National Treasure* and the Continuing Legacy of Benjamin Franklin**

In this workshop, we will consider some of the ways that the movie *National Treasure* helps us to understand the continuing legacy of the Founding Fathers and the *Declaration of Independence*. Following a short presentation about the film, participants will be invited to take a quiz about Ben Franklin and his material legacy. How are his inventions still in use today?



Dr. Holly Marcolina (SUNY Potsdam Teacher Education Department)

Literacy is Revolutionary

Combining the latest research in teaching literacy skills with primary documents of the 1700s, attendees will be exposed to a variety of literacy techniques to directly incorporate into a Social Studies classroom. This session provides teachers with lesser-known primary documents that are all aligned to the NYS Social Studies Framework. Particular attention is given to connecting

workshop resources to the stimulus-based multiple-choice questions and short essay formats that comprise the US History and Government Regents Examination.



Dr. Michael Oberg (SUNY Geneseo History Department) with Dr. Sheila McIntyre

What's So Great About the American Revolution?

We will look at the ways that Indigenous dispossession was crucial to the rise of the United States. While seeking liberty and independence from Great Britain, how did the leaders of the republic deny those same things to Indigenous nations?

The presenter will be virtual, with a local facilitator.

12:00 – 2:00 p.m. Noon lunch and learn

We'll take a short break, then join staff from the Loughheed Center for Applied Learning for lunch (provided) and an interactive workshop. Learn about applied learning and career opportunities for your social studies students. Share ideas and network with each other and SUNY Potsdam faculty and staff.

2:00 campus tours (optional)

Thank you to BOCES, to SUNY Potsdam's School of Arts & Sciences, and to the Loughheed Center For Applied Learning for supporting this professional development event!