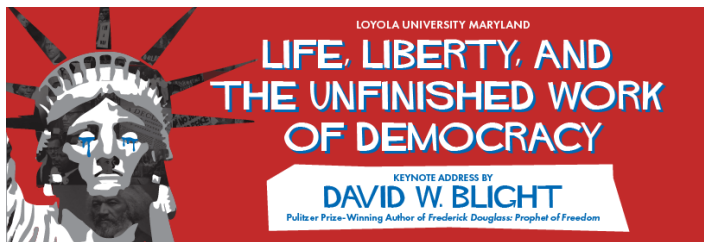


HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM

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2026 Humanities Symposium: *Life, Liberty, and the Unfinished Work of Democracy*



The 2026 Humanities Symposium will address the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence paired with "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" by Frederick Douglass.

On March 11th and 12th, classes in which professors elect to participate will gather during their regularly scheduled class times to discuss the readings.

The symposium culminates in a keynote address on Thursday, March 12 in McGuire Hall.

Event Information

Theme: Life, Liberty, and the Unfinished Work of Democracy

Texts: *The Declaration of Independence* and "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" by Frederick Douglass

Keynote Address:

Thursday, March 12, 2026
McGuire Hall
6:30 p.m.

[Register for the Keynote Address](#)

Faculty-Student Colloquia

Wednesday, March 11, 9:00 am - 4:15 pm
Thursday, March 12, 9:00 am - 4:20 pm

Faculty members, please register your classes for colloquium sessions on these days.

Questions? Please contact Billy Friebele, Associate professor, Visual and Performing Arts
wefriebele@loyola.edu

Join us for the Keynote Address

Thursday, March 12, 2026
McGuire Hall
Andrew White Student Center
6:30 PM

Keynote Speaker: David Blight

A renowned scholar and public historian, David W. Blight is the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of*



Freedom and has written extensively on slavery, the Civil War, and historical memory. Dr. Blight will deliver the 2026 Humanities Symposium keynote on Thursday, March 12th.

Dr. Blight is Sterling Professor of History at Yale University and Director of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition. He previously taught at Amherst College and has held distinguished fellowships at Cambridge University, the Huntington Library, and the New York Public Library. In 2020, Yale President Peter Salovey appointed him as chair of the Yale and Slavery Working Group. With his Working Group colleagues, Blight authored the book *Yale and Slavery: A History*, a narrative study of Yale's historic involvement and associations with slavery and its aftermaths, published by Yale University Press in February 2024. He has served as president of both the Organization of American Historians and the Society of American Historians, and continues to shape public history through his books, public lectures, advisory roles, and consulting for documentary films.

The event is free and open to the public.

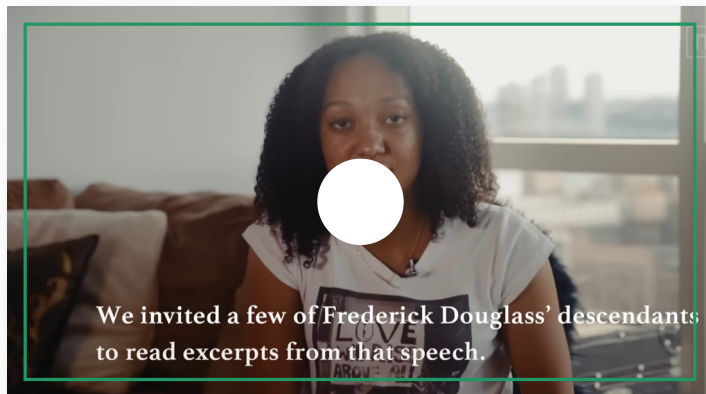
Persons with disabilities who may require special services should contact Disability & Accessibility Services at 410-617-2062 or (TTD) 410-617-2141.

Keynote Resources

PDF copy of the [Declaration of Independence](#)

PDF copy of "[What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?](#)"

Watch a video of descendants of Frederick Douglass [reading his speech](#) during the summer of 2020.



Listen to a Ken Burns video [discussing](#) the Declaration of Independence.



Student-Faculty Colloquia

Wednesday, March 11 and Thursday, March 12, 2026
McManus Theatre

Faculty from all disciplines and their students attend colloquium sessions together during their regularly scheduled class times.

Please **register on the Bridge** to let us know when you and your students will be participating on **Wednesday, March 11** and/or **Thursday, March 12**. Use the quantity box in each time slot to tell us how many students you will be bringing during that time.

Faculty members may select multiple time slots if participating with more than one class. Faculty whose classes fall outside the colloquia hours (Wednesday, March 11 from 8-5 and Thursday, March 12 from 8-4:20) may ask students to attend individually as long as the faculty member also attends one session.

For more information about the 2026 Humanities Symposium events, please email Billy Friebele, associate professor of Visual and Performing Arts, at wefriebele@loyola.edu.

Past Events:

PATHWAYS TO CAREERS IN MUSEUMS

Monday, February 23
Rizzo Career Center - Fernandez Hall
4:30 - 6:00 PM

co-sponsored with the Rizzo Career Center

Are you interested in working towards a career in a museum? Join curators Marina Dodd and Alexandria Anderson from the [Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum](#) in the Rizzo Career Center for an exciting panel talk and workshop followed by a light reception.

Participants will gain insight into the types of jobs available within a museum context and what experiences are needed to prepare for this type of career. The panel talk will culminate in a roundtable hands-on activity where participants will solve a curatorial challenge focused on Frederick Douglass in collaboration with experts from the museum! As we wind down the event, there will be an opportunity for networking and meeting the panelists over snacks.

If you require an accommodation to participate in this event, please contact the [Rizzo Career Center](#) prior to the event.

DOUGLASS DAY

Friday, February 13
Humanities Café

- **10:00 - 12:00 AM**
Celebrate and Educate
Stop by for hot chocolate, birthday cake, candy, valentines, and swag!

Learn about Frederick Douglass
Win an Uber Eats gift card and other gifts playing Black History trivia

- **12:00 - 3:00 PM**

Transcribe-a-thon

No special skills required: just bring your laptop

"FREDERICK DOUGLASS SPEAKS ON AMERICAN DEMOCRACY"

Wednesday, February 11

McManus Theatre

5:00 PM

Join Frederick Douglass (Nathan M. Richardson) as he recalls his escape from slavery and how he taught himself to read and write, becoming one of the greatest Abolitionists in the 19th Century. Learn how his relationships with William Lloyd Garrison, John Brown, the Suffragists and Presidents Lincoln, Garfield and Grant significantly influenced the antebellum, universal suffrage, the civil war and reconstruction. Hear Mr. Douglass explain his evolving views on the founding fathers, the U S Constitution and American Democracy. Bring your own questions and leave with a deeper understanding of Frederick Douglass.



Note about the performer:

Nathan M. Richardson is a published author, performance poet, Frederick Douglass Historian and Interpreter. He is the author of four collections of poetry and teaches a variety of workshops for emerging writers and spoken word artists. Nathan is now in the 14th year of The Frederick Douglass Speaking Tour - a living history performance that captures completely the physical, spiritual and intellectual essence of the former slave, writer, orator and abolitionist Frederick Douglass. You can learn more about Nathan Richardson and his work at www.scpublishing.com.



Is the Declaration Dead at 250? Considering the Historical Legacy of the Declaration of Independence

Panel Discussion with members of the History Department

Monday, November 17

5:00 - 6:00 PM

McGuire East

In the wake of the 2024 election, the Declaration's grievances circulated online as evidence of the United States' foundational anti-monarchical politics even as the newly inaugurated President declared that he would "restore truth and sanity to American history" by, in part, emphasizing the "unparalleled legacy of advancing liberty, individual rights, and human happiness." The meaning of the Declaration of Independence remains very much contested 250 years after it was written. As we prepare to engage this text as a community for the 2026 Humanities Symposium, join experts from the History Department in a conversation about the historical legacies of the Declaration of Independence, its significance at the time, and its relevance today. Panelists include Dr. Janna Haider on citizenship and the law, Dr. Matthew Mulcahy on the early Republic, and Dr. Oghenetaja Okoh on the global significance of the Declaration. The panel will be moderated by Dr. Andrew Israel Ross.

Constitution Day

"Frederick Douglass and the Nation's 'Saving Principles'"

Public lecture by Dr. Diana Schaub, Professor Emerita of Political Science

September 18 at 6:30 PM

McManus Theater

Diana Schaub is professor emerita of Political Science at Loyola University Maryland and a non-resident Senior Scholar in the Social, Cultural, and Constitutional Studies department at the American Enterprise Institute. She was the Garwood Teaching Fellow at Princeton University in 2011-12 and Visiting Professor of Political Theory in the Government Department at Harvard University in 2018, 2020, and 2022. From 2004 to 2009 she was a member of the President's Council on Bioethics. Her books include *Erotic Liberalism: Women and Revolution in Montesquieu's "Persian Letters"* and *His Greatest Speeches: How Lincoln Moved the Nation*.