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NECBS 2026 Conference Program - College of the Holy Cross

The 2026 Northeast Conference on British Studies (NECBS) annual conference is proudly hosted by College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA. The local arrangements chair is Mary Conley, Associate Professor of History at College of the Holy Cross. The NECBS thanks the Department of History at College of the Holy Cross, Holy Cross's Alexander Carson Fund, and Holy Cross's Provost's Office for their generous support. We also welcome Holy Cross undergraduates, whose historical education is enhanced by attending some conference sessions.

Please note: the Friday and Saturday events are held at different locations.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2:

Friday's conference begins in the main American Antiquarian Society (185 Salisbury Street), with registration opening at 2:30 pm in the reception area of the AAS (185 Salisbury Street). Parking is available along Regent Street, with accessible parking in front of both the main AAS building and the accompanying Goddard-Daniels House (190 Salisbury Street). Additionally, plentiful parking can be found nearby at the AAS's 90 Park Avenue lot with walking paths to their buildings.

2:30: Registration begins in the main reception area of the American Antiquarian Society (185 Salisbury Street).

3:00: Welcome in the Learning Lab and Tours of the Library (185 Salisbury Street).

Join us this afternoon to learn more about the holdings of the American Antiquarian Society, their alignment to your research interests, and funding opportunities.

4:00 pm: Registration continues at the Goddard Daniels House (190 Salisbury Street).

4:20-5:45: Panel Session One, Goddard Daniels House (190 Salisbury Street).

1A. Objects, Ephemera, and Cultural Histories

Location: Goddard Daniels House, American Antiquarian Society, 190 Salisbury Street

"You ask Whether I Like the Life": Digital Analysis of Anglo-Indian Diaries (c. 1850)

Benjamin Grey, Northeastern University

For Sale, Moose-Skin Boots, Never Worn: Inuit Commodities in Victorian Arctic Exploration

Peter Roy, Syracuse University

Ceol 7 Cúirtéireacht: Broadside Ballads and Courtship Behaviours in 19th-Century Ireland

Riley H. Johnson, Clark University

Chair: James Golden, Tufts University

5:45–7:00: Reception in the Goddard Daniels Library, American Antiquarian Society, 190 Salisbury Street

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3: All Saturday sessions will be held at the Hogan Campus Center on the campus of the College of the Holy Cross, 1 College Street. Parking is in the Hogan Parking Lot, which is adjacent to the Hogan Campus Center.

8:45: Breakfast Buffet and Registration: Hogan Campus Center

9:30-11:00: Panel Session Two

2A. Saints, Sanctity, and Conquest in the Medieval British Isles

Location: Hogan 406/407

Conversion and Community in St. Patrick's Confession

John Higgins, Smith College

Manly Elevation: The Masculinity Behind Aelfric's Life of St. Oswald

Michael Sexton, University of Rhode Island

Chair: Kate Olson, San José State University and Honorary Research Fellow, Bangor University (UK)

2B. Imagining Empire: Vision, Prophecy, and Imperial Rhetoric

Location: Hogan 408/409

The Sea is the Only Empire: An Ecological Language of Imperialism for Roman Britain and the British Empire

Avner Goldstein, Boston College

“The British Empire Imagined”: John Dee and a Vision of an Imperial British Identity

Evelyn Du Bon, University of North Texas

Lost Prophet of Empire? Alexander Gika, the Greek Count who Foresaw the Opium Wars

Matthew Wormer, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Chair: Mark Doyle, Middle Tennessee State University

2C. Bodies, Coercion, and the State

Location: Hogan 410

Marriage as Shield: British Colonial Governance and the Cypriot Bride Trade to Palestine

Katie Laird, Young Harris College

“Putrid Matter” and “Compulsory Poisoning”: Victorian Anti-Vax Sentiment in Colonial Mauritius, 1870s

Robert B. Cochran, Brandeis University

A Question of Representation? Starving Workmen, Seditious Socialists, and the West End Riots, 1886

Sophia Cohen Galvao, McMaster University

Chair: Jennifer Regan-Lefebvre, Trinity College

11:00-11:15: Coffee break

Location: Hogan Suite A

11:15-12:45: Panel Session Three

3A. Faith, Confession, and the Boundaries of Belonging

Location: Hogan 406/407

ZOOM Meeting ID:

The Context, Origin and Intent of “Parliament Physic for a Sin-Sick Nation”

Sean Sullivan, Independent Scholar

“The most un-English... piece of legislation”: Englishness and the Campaign to Repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts

Courteney Smith, St. Bonaventure University

“The scum of the population”: Oaths, Religion, and Secularisation in the Nineteenth Century

Karen A. Macfarlane, Trent University (online)

Chair: *Kristen Vitale Engel, Fitchburg State University*

3B. Political Imaginaries in Scotland and Wales

Location: Hogan 408/409

The Native Saints, Prophecy, and Popular Politics in Reformation Wales

Katharine K. Olson, San Jose State University

Thomas Innes and the Politics of Scottish Jacobite Historiography

Dylan Fowler, The Open University

“Disaffected Persons,” Projects, and Stocks: John Ker and Jacobite Politics in Empire, 1720–1730

Clare Byers, Kinder Institute, University of Missouri–Columbia

Chair: Craig Gallagher, Colby Sawyer College

3C. British Royal Women and Political Interventions

Location: Hogan 410 (Hybrid)

ZOOM Meeting ID:

Crown Princess Victoria in the Period of the Prussian Constitutional Conflict and German Unification (1858–1871)

Nathan N. Orgill, Georgia Gwinnett College (online)

“The Right to be Consulted, The Right to Encourage, and The Right to Warn”: Queen Victoria’s Marital Machinations Over Her Second Son

Aidan Jones, King’s College London (online)

Hidden Influence: Mary of Teck and Her Impact on George V’s Political Thinking

Judith Rowbotham, University of Plymouth (online)

Chair: Caroline Shaw, Bates College

12:50-2:30: Lunch break and Keynote Address

Location: Hogan Campus Center

Lunch will be a sandwich buffet, with vegan and nut-free options.

Keynote Address: The Painter’s Fire: A Forgotten History of the Artists Who Championed the American Revolution

Zara Anishanslin, University of Delaware

3:00-4:30: Panel Session Four

4A. Belonging and Conflict: Reimagining the Nation in Late Twentieth-Century Britain

Location: Hogan 406/407

ZOOM Meeting ID:

“Death to Betty Williams”: Peace Activism and Armed Opposition during the Troubles

Ashley M. Morin, Sacred Heart University

“All Aboard the Groovy Train to Hip London”: Fashion and Britishness during Cool Britannia

Margot Rashba, Boston University

The Soviet Threat, Ballistic Missile Defence and the British–United States Nuclear Partnership, 1988–1992

Alexander Rees, Swansea University (online)

Chair: Michael Ortiz, University of Rhode Island

4B. Performing Power and Projecting Legitimacy in the Early Modern Period

Location: Hogan 408/409

Pageantry, Performativity, and Power in the Early Henrician Dynastic Landscape

Kristen Vitale Engel, Fitchburg State University

“My Heart is Not Made For a Kingdom”: Reconstructing Mary II’s Beliefs on Leadership
Amelia Rosch, Queen’s University

Responding to Hunger and Famine in Early Modern England: Evidence from the State Papers
Amanda Coate, Independent Scholar / Stanford University

Chair: Lorraine Attreed, College of the Holy Cross

4C. Slavery and Unfreedom in the British World

Location: Hogan 410

Contesting Enslavement in 18th-Century Ireland: the Indian Experience
Mark Doyle, Middle Tennessee State University

Slavery and Community in Urban and Rural Eighteenth-Century New Hampshire
Timothy Hastings, University of Massachusetts Amherst

The Explorer and the Caravan: The Role of the Environment in Understanding the Trans-Saharan Slave Trade
Thomas Anderson, Merrimack College

Chair: Anna Suranyi, Endicott College

5-6 pm: Book Proposal Workshop (to be held at Courthouse Brewery) (at capacity)

****The Cohort will leave for the Courthouse from the Hogan 4th floor lobby at 4:45****

Courthouse Brewery, <https://courthousebrewcompany.com/>, 3 Brussels St. Suite 120, Worcester, MA 01610

Led by Jennifer Regan-Lefebvre, Trinity College and Mike Ortiz, University of Rhode Island. This preregistered workshop, which is at capacity, is open to anyone but particularly scholars writing their first book proposal. The workshop opens with the basics of identifying a press, pitching a book, and navigating the publication process (approx. 30 minutes), followed by small-group discussion of proposals. Participants were advised to bring a printed copy of a draft proposal and to respond to emails about the workshop. This workshop is now full.

6:00-8:00: Reception at the Courthouse Brewery for all registrants

Please join us for an NECBS-sponsored reception at Courthouse Brewery, which is a 10-minute walk from Holy Cross and accessible by car (3 Brussels St. Suite 120 in Worcester, MA, 01610. Drive to the back of the building that houses the coffee shop, *Acoustic Java*). The brewery is located in a building of a former carpet mill complex, which was owned by Matthew Whittall, a British engineer who emigrated to Worcester from Kidderminster, a former carpet-making center in England. This South Worcester neighborhood was once considered the “English enclave” of Worcester. See <https://courthousebrewcompany.com/>

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4:

All Saturday sessions will be held at the Hogan Campus Center on the campus of the College of the Holy Cross, 1 College Street. Parking is at the Hogan Parking Lot, which is adjacent to the Hogan Campus Center. All Session Five panels are hybrid.

From 8:30: Coffee and Continental Breakfast — Hogan Campus Center, Suite A

9:00–10:30: Panel Session Five

5A. 1776, 1945: Revolution, Memory, and the Cataclysm of War

Location: Hogan 406/7 (Hybrid Session)

ZOOM Meeting ID: [TBD]

Establishing Therein an Arbitrary Government: The American Colonial Response to the 1774 Quebec Act

Greta Gaffin, Independent Scholar (in person)

Self-Reliance under Empire: Raychaudhuri, American Transcendentalism, and the Bengali Afterlife of 1776

Swetabja Mallik, University of Hyderabad (online)

1775 and 1945: Transatlantic Depictions of the American Revolution During World War II

Elizabeth Grumer, Independent Scholar (in person)

After the Bombs Fell: Portland Square and the Management of Civilian War Death

Michael C. McLaughlin, Independent Scholar (in person)

Chair: Gwenn Miller, College of the Holy Cross

5B. Empire Beyond Formal Rule: Networks, Ideology, and Personal Authority

Location: Hogan 410 (Hybrid Session)

ZOOM Meeting ID: [TBD]

Gerald of Wales and his Critique of English Colonialism: a 12th c. Riposte

June-Ann Greeley, Sacred Heart University (online)

Scotland's Failed Colony: Rethinking the Causes and Context of the Darien Scheme

Darrion Singh, York University (online)

From Public School Authority to Postcolonial Institution: Geoffrey Langlands and British Pedagogy in Pakistan, 1954–2019

Eskandar Ross, University of Oxford (online)

“For the Benefit of the World”: Imperial Scrutiny and the Conference on Egypt in 1882

Rebecca L. Burrows, Binghamton University (online)

Chair: Sanjog Rupakheti, College of the Holy Cross

10:45–12:15: Business Meeting and Light Lunch