

Largest Social Studies  
Conference in Northern Illinois



# DuPage County Social Studies Conference

**2026**



Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | 7:00am -1:00pm

Metea Valley High School  
1801 N. Eola Road, Aurora, IL

# AGENDA

Conference Schedule

2026



7:00am-8:00 am

**Sign-In & Breakfast**

Networking and Publisher Exhibits



8:00am-8:55 am

**Session I**



9:10am-10:05 am

**Session 2**



10:20 am-11:15 am

**Session 3**



11:15 am-12:05 pm

**Networking Lunch**

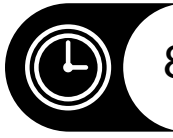
Lunch & Learns, Publisher Visits



12:05 pm-1:00 pm

**Session 4**





8:00am - 8:55 am

Session I



## Memories and Milestones: Preserving South Asian Immigrant Voices in Illinois

**Dr. Julie Achettu & Ms. Shobhana Verma**

*This session introduces SAAPRI's Memories and Milestones oral history project, which documents South Asian immigrants who settled in Illinois before the 1965 immigration reforms. Participants will explore how these stories illuminate overlooked histories and support implementation of the TEAACH Act. Attendees will leave with practical tools, lessons, and strategies to center AANHPI voices and intergenerational storytelling in their curriculum.*

## Schools and Residential Segregation

**Dr. Karen Benjamin**

*This session examines the intertwined histories of residential and school segregation in the United States, revealing how white residential developers, planning consultants, and their allies in government strategically shifted from block-level to neighborhood-level segregation. By linking these practices to middle-class ideals of "good parenting," such strategies secured the longevity of both residential and school segregation. Attendees will gain historical context and classroom strategies for teaching the intertwined legacies of housing and school segregation.*

## The Power of Translation: Language, Empire, and the Making of the Modern World

**Dr. Laura Brueck**

*Public monuments say a lot about who we honor — and who we forget. This session examines Chicago monuments such as the Haymarket Police Monument, Confederate Mound in Oak Woods Cemetery, and the Balbo Monument, highlighting their ties to anti-worker, racist, and fascist histories. Participants will also learn about new memorial projects, including the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 Commemoration Project, and leave with ideas for teaching monuments as contested historical texts*

## Less Stress, More Success: Supporting ELs Without Overcomplicating Your Work

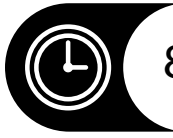
**Ms. Lisa Carnahan**

*Supporting English Learners (ELs) in the social studies classroom can feel overwhelming, especially when balancing content, language development, and instructional demands. This session for grades 6–12 teachers will provide practical strategies to simplify your work while maximizing student growth. Participants will leave with ready-to-use tools, practical routines, and strategies that make teaching ELs both more effective and more manageable.*

## The Great Divide: Understanding Political Polarization in America

**Dr. April Clark**

*Educators are on the front lines of cultural and political division; navigating polarized environments ourselves while also in a unique position to help facilitate how future generations handle civic disagreement. In other words, teachers are both impacted by, and influencers of, the polarization dynamic — through classrooms, relationships with parents and communities, and the curriculum they teach. Participants will learn research-based strategies to reduce partisan animus and promote the civic mission of schools in an increasingly divided America.*



8:00am - 8:55 am

Session I



### Big Trouble in the Windy City: Rethinking Chicago’s Monuments

**Dr. Peter Cole**

*Public monuments say a lot about who we honor — and who we forget. This session examines Chicago monuments such as the Haymarket Police Monument, Confederate Mound in Oak Woods Cemetery, and the Balbo Monument, highlighting their ties to anti-worker, racist, and fascist histories. Participants will also learn about new memorial projects, including the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 Commemoration Project, and leave with ideas for teaching monuments as contested historical texts*

### Let’s DO Social Studies: Engaging Students in Classroom Simulations

**Ms. Mary Ellen Daneels**

*Simulations bring civic processes to life. In this interactive session, participants will experience classroom-tested simulations that model democratic practices in time frames ranging from ten minutes to several days. They will explore free resources, debrief strategies, and ways to align simulations with content standards. Attendees will leave with ready-to-use ideas that let students “do” social studies, not just read about it.*

### The Evolving Russia–Ukraine War: Factors Shaping the Conflict

**Dr. Richard Farkas**

*Despite staggering casualties, the war in Ukraine remains locked in a deadly stalemate. Political leaders dance around one another with symbolic rhetoric, but little changes. This session will lay out the factors that are impacting the inertia from the Russian, Ukrainian, European and American perspectives.*

### Current Federal Issues

**Dr. Steve Schwinn**

*Dr. Schwinn will present and discuss the current cases and issues before the Supreme Court.*

### Why Health Care is Not Like Other Goods and Services (Zoom presentation)

**Dr. Charles Wheelan**

*This session will explore the underlying economics that make health care a uniquely difficult public policy challenge. It will highlight the tradeoffs associated with different health care systems, both within the United States and across countries. The session will also probe why American health care is so expensive relative to the rest of the world and how we might move toward a system that generates better health outcomes in a more affordable way.*

**DR. WHEELAN WILL PRESENT REMOTELY VIA ZOOM**



More information at [www.dupagecountysocialstudies.org](http://www.dupagecountysocialstudies.org)



8:55am - 9:05 am

Visit Publisher and Non-Profit Tables



## Voices from Law Enforcement and Public Service: A Criminal Justice Roundtable

### Mr. Ryan Dengel

*In this session, participants will hear from a public defense attorney, a council member, a former county sheriff, and a current police chief, each offering unique insights into the challenges and opportunities facing communities today. Through an engaging panel discussion, attendees will explore topics such as equity in the justice system, the evolving role of law enforcement, and the social factors influencing policy and practice. Participants will gain diverse perspectives and ideas for connecting real-world justice issues to classroom learning.*

## Race and Diplomacy: Anti-Asian Racism and the 1907 "Gentlemen's Agreement"

### Dr. Luke Franks

*This presentation explores how digital tools can transform historical inquiry, enabling students to interpret evidence, craft arguments, and create multimodal histories. Participants will discover platforms for digital writing, collaborative reading, and interactive creation that foster critical thinking, deepen engagement, and prepare learners to connect past and future meaningfully.*

## When is a search a search? What's New with the Fourth Amendment

### Ms. Tiffany Middleton & Dr. Catherine Hawke

*Explore how the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Fourth Amendment is changing in an era of rapid technological development. Through interactive, jigsaw-style case studies, participants will examine key rulings on search and seizure, including a current-term case. Attendees will receive free ABA classroom resources to help students analyze privacy, policing, and the courts while strengthening civil discourse around constitutional rights.*

## Digital Storytelling in History: Connecting Past, Present, and Future

### Dr. Michael Manderino

*This presentation explores how digital tools can transform historical inquiry, enabling students to interpret evidence, craft arguments, and create multimodal histories. Participants will discover platforms for digital writing, collaborative reading, and interactive creation that foster critical thinking, deepen engagement, and prepare learners to connect past and future meaningfully.*

## What backs the US Dollar

### Dr. Brenden Mason

*US currency is backed by nothing but fiat — government decree. Is the stability of the US dollar as fragile as it seems, circulating only on account of habit, inertia, and expectations? This session will consider competing theories to explain the backing of currency. The schools of thought have different implications regarding how economists think about inflation as well the long-term viability of alternative monies such as cryptocurrencies and central bank digital currencies (CBDCs), which, in turn, have potential ramifications regarding privacy and consumer protection.*



## Reinventing Monarchy: Henry VIII and the Birth of Modern Government

### Dr. Jennifer McNabb

*Henry VIII is famous for his wives, but his reign from the Renaissance and Reformation transformed the English government. This session examines how Tudor policies reimagined royal authority and broke with medieval traditions. Participants will connect Henry's England to the "New Monarchies" in the AP European History framework and leave with primary-source strategies and teaching aids to deepen students' understanding of early modern state building.*

## Color in the Classroom: Tips for Addressing Color Bias for Teachers

### Dr. Caitlin Mercier

*This interactive session will explore how colorism (skin tone bias) can occur to impact all students in the classroom. It will identify, define, and outline how colorism occurs in society to impact teaching and learning behavior in the classroom. Attendees will walk away with (a) knowing the difference between racism and colorism, (b) being able to identify colorist bias, (c) reflect on potential impact of colorist bias in their teaching practices, and (d) resources and concrete strategies cultivate empathy and affirming spaces for all students in the classroom.*

## From Mao to the Market: Teaching Modern China

### Dr. Febe Pamonag

*How did China move from revolution to global economic powerhouse? This session examines major political, social, and economic developments from 1949 to the present, including life under Mao and the reforms that followed. Participants will work with primary sources to deepen their understanding and leave with strategies and materials for teaching modern China in secondary classrooms.*

## Supreme Court Update

### Dr. Steve Schwinn

*From separation-of-powers disputes to major regulatory changes, federal developments can be hard to track — and even harder to teach. This session highlights current federal legal and policy issues with particular relevance for social studies classrooms. Participants will have time for questions and will leave with clear explanations and discussion prompts to help students make sense of fast-moving national events.*





10:20am-11:15am

Session 3



## Justice and Reform: The Evolving Response to Domestic Violence

**Judge Robert Anderson & Mr. Tom Murray**

*This extended session examines how the criminal justice system is evolving in its response to domestic violence. Presenters will discuss specialized courts, improved law enforcement training, prosecution practices including respect for victims and better sentencing, and services such as rehabilitation, counseling and shelter. They will also address firearms, trauma-informed approaches, and interagency collaboration.*

## How to Do the DBQ: Scaffolding AP History Success

**Mr. John Chisholm & Mr. Nick Caltagirone**

*The DBQ can feel intimidating for students and teachers alike. In this session, two veteran AP History teachers share how they broke the DBQ into scaffolded skills taught across the year. Participants will examine models, templates, and sample prompts, discuss concerns and potential responsible AI use in DBQ preparation, and leave with a practical toolbox of resources to boost student confidence.*

## A Glimpse Into America's Future: Generational Changes in Civic Engagement

**Dr. April Clark**

*Gen Z reports high political engagement, but their participation looks very different from that of older generations. Each generation engages with politics in unique ways, influenced by their experiences, historical contexts, and technological developments. This session examines how generations develop distinct civic styles shaped by history, technology, and culture.*

## Reframing Native American History: Language, Labels, and Power in US History Classroom

**Dr. Shana Bushyhead Condill**

*This session invites grades 6–12 educators to critically examine the language, labels, and narratives commonly used to describe Native American history in classrooms and curricular materials. Educators will leave with strategies for teaching Native American history in ways that honor Indigenous perspectives, emphasize continuity and resilience, and encourage students to think critically about the stories we tell – and who gets to tell them.*

## Civil Conversations in the Classroom

**Ms. Mary Ellen Daneels**

*Research from the University of Chicago shows that engaging student voice in the classroom can have a positive impact on academic outcomes. This workshop will share research-based best practices to foster respect and civil dialogue in the classroom. Participants will leave prepared to create classroom cultures where students listen carefully, disagree respectfully, and engage productively with diverse viewpoints.*

## War, Tech, and Diplomacy: How Innovation Reshapes Conflict

**Dr. Richard Farkas**

*Despite staggering casualties, the war in Ukraine remains locked in a deadly stalemate. Political leaders dance around one another with symbolic rhetoric, but little changes. This session will lay out the factors that are impacting the inertia from the Russian, Ukrainian, European and American perspectives.*



10:20am-11:15am

Session 3



### **Trade in Turmoil: Can the Free Trade System Survive?**

**Dr. David Faris**

*This session examines how organizations such as Freedom House evaluate democratic health using indicators like corruption, minority rights, elections, and judicial independence. Participants will analyze why many indices show U.S. “democratic backsliding” and whether it reflects global patterns or uniquely American challenges. They’ll leave with comparative tools and data sources to enrich discussions of democracy in class.*

### **Everything Must Go!: How Consumer Culture Shaped Modern America**

**Dr. Andrea Field**

*From Stanley cups to Jordans, American identity is often defined by what we buy. This presentation combines history, economics, and politics to explore the mass marketing, social media trends and legacy of consumer culture on American life. Using the Kroehler Manufacturing Company in Naperville as a local case study, participants will gain strategies for connecting national economic change to students’ everyday lives.*

### **Teaching the Unthinkable: Exploring Genocide Across History**

**Dr. Stephanie Krzeminski**

*The term genocide is less than a century old, yet the crimes it describes long predate its naming. From the Armenian genocide of 1915, to the Holocaust, to the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, these events reveal recurring patterns of violence fueled by nationalism, colonialism, expansion, and ideology. Drawing on research and travel to sites in Europe, Asia, and Africa, this session offers frameworks, testimonies, and classroom strategies for teaching genocide responsibly.*

### **The Use of Consequences of Parenting**

**Dr. Michael Maniacci**

*Parenting isn’t easy and knowing how to respond when kids test boundaries can feel overwhelming. Participants will explore how the use of consequences in parenting impacts child behavior. In the field of psychology, consequences are examined according to two types: natural and logical. In this session the natural and logical consequences will be broken down, described in detail and their applications and implications examined.*

### **Population and Demographics in a United States and Japan Comparison**

**Dr. Rex (RJ) Rowley**

*Falling birthrates and aging populations are reshaping societies. This session compares demographic change in the United States and Japan to illustrate concepts such as the demographic transition model, population decline, and population pyramids. Participants will explore data and visualizations and leave with approachable ways to teach complex demographic trends and their social implications in a social studies class.*



More information at  
[www.dupagecountysocialstudies.org](http://www.dupagecountysocialstudies.org)





11:15am - 12:05pm

# LUNCH & LEARNS

## **Democracy in Action: Engaging Students with a Legislative Simulation**

**Candi Fikis, Legislative Semester Civics Initiative**

Join us over the lunch hour to learn more about the legislative simulation used at West Chicago Community High School as the framework for a government class. The program is now active in 23 other schools in 5 states, and interested teachers can connect with the Legislative Semester 501(c)3 for support to bring this course to their school.

**D 104**

## **Exploring Social Studies Resources with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt**

**Ken Oishi, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt**

Description: Come explore all the Social Studies offerings from HMH. In this interactive presentation you will get to experience our AI tools and connected offerings that make HMH's Social Studies curriculum second to none.

**D105**

## **The Future is Now: Using Dialogue to Explore the Double-Edge Sword of Innovation**

**Andrea Field & Jessica Toran [Learning Experiences Team Leaders]**

Join us in lively discussion about how technology has shaped our world for better and worse. From industrial revolutions to social media revolutions, this lunch and learn will explore how progress often comes with a price tag. Learn how to spark meaningful conversations to help students think critically about the digital age.

**D106**

## **A Path to Honor: Ethical Decision Making**

**Javier Martinez, Congressional Medal of Honor Education**

Learn about the *Path of Honor*, an interactive video resource that places students inside real historical moments that ask them to decide what they would do. Each 3 minute scenario works great for whole-class discussions or for students to complete independently.

**D109**

## **Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth, the why and how!**

**Julio Flores, Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC)**

This session will identify and provide strategies for creating more affirming environments for LGBTQ+ young people, gain familiarity of language and terminology and build an understanding of common needs, barriers, and protective factors for LGBTQ+ youth.

**B146**



## The Great Migration from the Rural South to the Urban North

### Dr. William Barnett

*This session examines the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North, focusing on the push of Jim Crow, racial violence, and sharecropping and the pull of new job opportunities. Participants will explore how this movement reshaped cities, altered the South, and continues to influence migration patterns today. They will leave with primary sources and framing questions for U.S. history classes.*

## A Year in Retrospect: A Look Back on First Year of New Curriculum in AP Psychology

### Dr. Laura Brandt

*This session will explore the lessons that we learned from the first year of AP Psychology with a new curriculum. We will examine some of the new concepts added to the course, what we learned from the first AP reading, and how we can best prepare our students in the future to be successful in the course and in applying psychology to their own lives.*

## AI in Social Studies: Shifting Pedagogies to Transform Student Learning

### Mr. Arpan Chokshi

*Artificial intelligence is transforming how students read, write, and research — and how teachers design learning. This workshop shows educators how to adapt instruction so students still do the cognitive heavy lifting while using AI as a meaningful support. Participants will explore concrete strategies, sample prompts, and classroom models for ethical, effective AI use that deepens content mastery and critical thinking. Laptop recommended but not required.*

## Voting Rights and Wrongs: 250 Years of U.S. Suffrage

### Dr. Andrea Field

*How democratic should the United States be? This session uses the history of voting rights to trace the nation's evolution from a limited republic to a more inclusive — yet still contested — democracy. By examining rights gained and rights lost, participants will explore who has been included in “We the People” and who has been left out. Attendees will leave with tools to connect past suffrage struggles to current debates.*

## Power and Propaganda in the World's First Empires

### Dr. Jennifer Finn

*How did early empires persuade subjects to accept their rule? This session explores how Akkad (the “first world empire”), Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Macedon, and Rome used royal inscriptions, literature, and material culture to project legitimacy and “soft power.” Participants will see how propaganda strategies evolved over time and gain ideas for using ancient sources to teach about empire, ideology, and historical narrative.*



12:05pm - 1:00pm

Session 4



## Democracy on the Decline? Tracking Global and U.S. Trends

**Dr. David Faris**

*Built after World War II, the global free-trade system was designed to promote prosperity and reduce conflict among nations. This session traces the development of global free-trade, the rise of regional agreements, and recent challenges, including escalating tariffs and nationalist backlash. Participants will explore competing perspectives on trade's benefits and costs and consider what the future of the global trading order means for the U.S. and the world.*

## After the Verdict: Understanding the Post-Conviction Process

**Ms. Tiffany Middleton & Dr. Catherine Hawke**

*What happens after conviction? This session walks educators through the post-conviction timeline, including probation, parole, expungement, civil forfeiture, and how prior convictions shape future charges. Using recent high-profile examples, participants will unpack key policy debates and justice reform efforts. Attendees will leave with ready-to-use case studies, resources, and strategies to help students critically examine what "justice" means beyond the verdict.*

## A Brief History of Zen: From India to China and Japan

**Dr. Brian Hoffert**

*This session explores the evolution of Zen Buddhism across South and East Asia. Beginning with its origins in India, the talk traces how Buddhist practices and ideas were transformed in China through interaction with Daoism, resulting in the emergence of Chan Buddhism. It then examines the further adaptation of Chan in Japan, where aesthetic and cultural influences shaped what became known as Zen.*

## Election 2026: Illinois Politics in a Pivotal Midterm Year

**Dr. Shawn Healy**

*With Senator Durbin's retirement, competitive congressional races, and a high-stakes governor's contest, Illinois' 2026 midterms offer a rich case study in democratic politics. Come learn about the current state of play in these contests and others down the ballot just weeks before the Illinois Primaries. Emerge equipped to engage students in conversations about these candidates and prevailing issues, navigating public opinion polling and political advertising, and developing an excitement about and commitment to informed voting in this and future elections.*

## Federal Budget Cut Impacts on the State of Illinois Finances

**Mr. Ralph Martire accompanied by Annie Rojas**

*Sweeping federal spending cuts undertaken in 2025 will reshape funding for health care, food assistance, public education, housing, and clean energy. This session analyzes how the "One Big Beautiful Bill" could affect Illinois residents, the state budget, and the broader economy.*



More information at  
[www.dupagecountysocialstudies.org](http://www.dupagecountysocialstudies.org)

# PRESENTERS

## **Dr. Julie Thomas Achettu**

*Dr. Julie Thomas Achettu is Education Consultant for the South Asian American Policy & Research Institute (SAAPRI). With over twenty years of experience as a teacher, district leader, and consultant, she has developed Asian American Literature and Ethnic Studies curricula in multiple states. She designs and leads workshops that fulfill the Illinois TEAACH Act, supporting educators in integrating South Asian American voices into K-12 curricula. Previously, she also taught at Loyola University Chicago. She has presented nationally at universities and on numerous panels about Asian American education and policy.*

## **Judge Robert Anderson**

*Judge Robert Anderson is a retired DuPage County Circuit Judge who served in the Divorce, Felony, and Juvenile Courts for 27 years. He graduated from Loyola University of Chicago with a B.A. and J.D. Judge Anderson has been honored for his work in violence prevention, promoting education on domestic violence and juvenile issues. He is an adjunct professor at Loyola University School of Law and he regularly presents at local and national law and social studies conferences. He is a past President of the Illinois Judges Association and a past Chair of the DuPage County Circuit Court Family Violence Coordinating Council.*

## **Dr. William Barnett**

*Dr. Will Barnett is Professor of History at North Central College. He earned his B.A. in History from Yale University, his M.A. in History from the University of Texas at Austin, and his Ph.D. in History from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A former high school teacher, he now teaches a variety of U.S. history classes. Barnett's research focuses on environmental and urban history, and he is co-editor of *City of Lake and Prairie: Chicago's Environmental History*.*

## **Dr. Karen Benjamin**

*Dr. Karen Benjamin is the Lester Brune and Joan Brune Endowed Chair of History at Elmhurst University. She graduated with a Ph.D. in History and Educational Policy Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2007. Her wide-ranging courses include Colonial America, Revolutionary America, Industrial-Age America, Twentieth-Century U.S., Environmental History, U.S. West, U.S. South, and The Formation of the Chicago Ghetto. She received the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2021. Her new book, *Good Parents, Better Homes, and Great Schools: Selling Segregation before the New Deal* was published in 2025.*

## **Sheriff John Bertuca**

*Sheriff John Bertuca served as a DuPage County Sheriff for 24 years and previously worked in Cook County Corrections. He has participated in numerous student panels, sharing insights into policing, corrections, and the social dimensions of criminal justice.*

## **Dr. Laura Brandt**

*Dr. Laura Brandt teaches AP Psychology and serves as the Social Studies department chair at Libertyville high school in the Chicago suburbs. She also teaches for the Center for Talent Development through Northwestern University. Laura has served on the TOPSS executive board, which represents high school psychology instructors within the American Psychological Association and as a table and question leader for the AP Psychology exam. Laura is a co-creator of the I-Score 5 review, the Books for Psychology Class blog, and the co-author of the 3rd edition AMSCO book for AP Psychology.*

## **Dr. Laura Brueck**

*Dr. Laura Brueck is a Professor of South Asian and Comparative Literature at Northwestern University, where she also directs the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities. Her areas of expertise include anti-caste literature, the intersections of caste and race, popular vernacular genres of South Asian literature, and the theory and practice of translation. She is the author of *Writing Resistance: The Rhetorical Imagination of Hindi Dalit Literature* (Columbia University Press, 2014), has published numerous translations of Hindi literature, and edited several scholarly volumes, most recently the *Routledge Companion to Postcolonial and Decolonial Literature* (2025).*

## **Ms. Lisa Carnahan**

*Ms. Lisa Carnahan has over 25 years of experience teaching high school English language learners. She began her career at Waubonsie Valley High School, where she earned her ELL certification and a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction. During a break from full-time teaching, she worked part-time at the College of DuPage in the ELL and Adult Education Program and as a writing instructor at several area high schools, supporting students in strengthening their communication skills. Since returning to full-time teaching at Metea Valley High School, Lisa has co-taught a wide range of courses. She is passionate about co-teaching and values the opportunity to support both content teachers and students in achieving academic success.*

## **Mr. Nick Caltagirone**

*Mr. Nick Caltagirone is a veteran social studies teacher at West Chicago Community High School, where he has taught AP World History, World Studies, U.S. History, and Philosophy for 25 years. He studied history and philosophy at Northern Illinois University and education at Benedictine University. Caltagirone is known for his thoughtful approach to DBQ instruction – and for spending his free time with books, coffee, and jazz.*

## Mr. Arpan Chokshi

*Mr. Arpan Chokshi is a National Board Certified Teacher and instructional coach at Hinsdale Township District 86. He provides professional development on education technology and student-centered pedagogy. Chokshi earned a Bachelor of Arts and Masters in Education Technology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He earned a second Masters in Teaching & Learning at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is nationally recognized for his writing and workshops on AI in schools. Chokshi also trains teachers on implementing blended, self-paced, and mastery-based learning as an Expert Mentor for the Modern Classroom Project.*

## Mr. John Chisholm

*Mr. John Chisholm is a social studies teacher at West Chicago Community High School with two decades of classroom experience. He has taught AP U.S. History for over 13 years, along with courses in government, U.S. history, and world wars. Chisholm focuses on collaborative, inquiry-based learning and works closely with colleagues to vertically align AP writing instruction. He is a graduate of Augustana College and received his Masters of Education from Concordia. Mr. Nick Caltagirone is a veteran social studies teacher at West Chicago Community High School, where he has taught AP World History, World Studies, U.S. History, and Philosophy for 25 years. He studied history and philosophy at Northern Illinois University and education at Benedictine University. Caltagirone is known for his thoughtful approach to DBQ instruction — and for spending his free time with books, coffee, and jazz.*

## Dr. April Clark

*Dr. April K. Clark is Assistant Chair of the Department of Political Science at Northern Illinois University and a former research associate at the Pew Research Center. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Santa Barbara, California, and her B.A. from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. Her work focuses on political behavior, public opinion, and civic engagement. Her research and commentary have appeared in outlets such as The Washington Post, USA Today, and NBC.com, and she teaches courses on political psychology and American politics.*

## Dr. Peter Cole

*Dr. Peter Cole is Professor of History and Distinguished University Professor at Western Illinois University, and a research associate in the Society, Work, and Politics Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa. He is the award-winning author of *Dockworker Power: Race and Activism in Durban and the San Francisco Bay Area* and *Wobblies on the Waterfront: Interracial Unionism in Progressive-Era Philadelphia*. Dr. Cole founded and co-directs the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 Commemoration Project.*

## **Dr. Shana Bushyhead Condill**

*Dr. Shana Bushyhead Condill, a citizen of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, is Executive Director of the Museum of the Cherokee People in North Carolina. With more than twenty years in museums and cultural work, she has advanced Native representation at institutions including the National Gallery of Art and the National Trust for Historic Preservation as well as serving on multiple state commissions. She holds degrees from Illinois Wesleyan University and the University of Delaware and is pursuing a PhD at George Mason University. Condill advocates for the intentional combining of mainstream best practices with Native best practices in cultural preservation.*

## **Ms. Mary Ellen Daneels**

*Ms. Mary Ellen Daneels taught social studies at West Chicago Community High School for 27 years and now directs the Illinois Democracy Schools Network. She provides professional development on civic learning across disciplines and has been featured in Education Week, Social Education, and Educational Leadership. Daneels has advised lawmakers on civic education and helped develop the Educating for American Democracy Roadmap.*

## **Mr. Ryan Dengel**

*Mr. Ryan Dengel is a Social Studies teacher at Naperville North High School, where he teaches Sociology, 20th Century History, and World Religions. With a focus on fostering civic engagement and critical thinking, Ryan regularly incorporates guest speakers and real-world perspectives into his classes to help students connect academic study with contemporary issues. He has organized the Criminal Justice speaker series for over a decade, bringing professionals from law enforcement, legal practice, and public service into the classroom to enrich student learning.*

## **Dr. David Faris**

*Dr. David Faris is Professor of Political Science at Roosevelt University in Chicago and a contributing writer for Slate and Newsweek. He is the author of *The Kids Are All Left* and *It's Time to Fight Dirty*, as well as scholarly work on digital activism and Middle East politics. Faris frequently comments on democracy, reform, and political strategy in national media outlets.*

## **Dr. Richard Farkas**

*Dr. Richard Farkas is a professor of political science at DePaul University. In his over forty year career, he has lectured widely in Russia, Poland, Hungary, and Croatia. His research compares strategies for political and economic development in post-Communist and post-conflict societies. A designated Fulbright Senior Specialist, he has consulted for major corporations and appeared frequently in U.S. and international media to explain global politics.*

## Dr. Andrea Field

*Dr. Andrea Field is curator of history at Naper Settlement. She holds an MA and PhD in public history and American history from Arizona State University. Her work explores the intertwined histories of race and economics, especially housing. She helped lead the IMLS-funded Unvarnished project on housing discrimination and is the creator of teacher professional development, public programs, and the podcast Your Friendly Neighborhood Historian.*

## Dr. Jennifer Finn

*Dr. Jenn Finn is Associate Professor and chair of Classical Studies at Loyola University Chicago. She holds doctorates in Greek and Roman History and in Assyriology. Her research spans Mediterranean and Near Eastern history, including cross-cultural contact, military history, and the Roman reception of Alexander the Great. She is the author of Much Ado about Marduk and Contested Pasts: A Determinist History of Alexander the Great in the Roman Empire.*

## Dr. Luke Franks

*Dr. Luke Franks is a Professor of History and Chair of the Department of History at North Central College. He teaches courses on Japan, East Asia, and transnational history, and directs the department's Capstone research program. His research explores the transformation of Japan's samurai order into a modern bureaucratic system, with a focus on regional and local developments in Okinawa. His recent publications include "The Endless Postwar: Okinawa at the Modern Frontier" (2023), "Ulysses S. Grant and the Governors: Local Politics on Display in Early Meiji Japan" (2022), and "The Politics of Stalemate: Local Power, U.S. Military Bases, and the Japanese Courts" (2017).*

## Dr. Catherine Hawke

*Dr. Catherine Hawke is Deputy Director of the ABA's Division for Public Education. She develops professional learning programs on constitutional law, the Supreme Court, and the rule of law, helping educators bring complex legal issues into K-12 classrooms.*

## Dr. Shawn Healy

*Dr. Shawn Healy leads iCivics' policy and advocacy work through the CivXNow Coalition and oversees state and national civic education campaigns. He also serves as an adjunct Public Policy professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago and on the Board of Directors of the Legislative Semester, Inc., and the Student Press Law Center. He began his career as a social studies teacher in Wisconsin and Illinois. A 2001 James Madison Fellow, Healy holds an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Chicago in political science, and a bachelor's degree with distinction in Political Science, History, and Secondary Education from the University of Wisconsin at Madison.*



## **Dr. Brian Hoffert**

*Dr. Brian Hoffert is Associate Professor of Religious Studies and History at North Central College, where he also coordinates the History of Ideas Honors Program and East Asian Studies. He holds a PhD in East Asian Languages and Civilizations from Harvard University and has studied in Toronto, Taipei, and Hawai'i. His work focuses on Chinese philosophy, East Asian religions, and cross-cultural intellectual exchange. His academic preparation and extensive research on a number of important East Asian topics allow him to speak expertly on this region of the world.*

## **Councilman Dr. Ian Holzhauer**

*Council Dr. Ian Holzhauer is a Naperville North alumnus, Naperville City Council member, and former prosecutor and defense attorney in the U.S. Air Force. He frequently speaks with District 203 students about criminal justice and civic responsibility.*

## **Ms. Heather Jamieson**

*Ms. Heather Jamieson is a Certified Domestic Violence Professional and supervisor of the Family Shelter Service court program. Since 1995, she has worked in shelter counseling, court advocacy, and systems coordination. Jamieson serves on multiple councils and boards focused on family violence, legal aid, and child-friendly courts and received the 2025 Liberty Bell Award from the DuPage County Bar Association. Heather graduated from Illinois State University with a BS in Criminal Justice and a minor in Psychology. She is also a Certified Domestic Violence Professional. Heather was the recipient of the 2025 Liberty Bell Award from the DCBA.*

## **Dr. Stephanie Krzeminski**

*Dr. Stephanie Krzeminski has taught high school social studies for nearly 20 years and received her PhD in Holocaust & Genocide Studies from Gratz College in 2024. Over the course of her career, she has pursued fellowships that have brought her to Europe, Asia, and Africa which enriched her understanding of the events and the impact that these genocides and crimes against humanity still carry. She has served on the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center's Educator Advisory Committee since 2016, and has taught at Oswego East High School since 2015.*

## **Dr. Michael Manderino**

*Dr. Michael Manderino is Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Northern Illinois University. His research focuses on digital literacies for disciplinary learning, particularly with adolescent students. He is co-director of NIU's Social Justice Summer Camp for Educators, incoming co-editor of the Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, and co-author of several books, including Graphic Novels in High School and Middle School Classrooms: A Disciplinary Approach*

## **Dr. Michael Maniacci**

*Dr. Michael P. Maniacci, Psy.D, is a licensed clinical psychologist with practices in Naperville and Chicago. He has been in the field since 1981 and has worked in numerous settings, including community mental health centers, private hospitals, rehabilitation centers, residential programs and private practice. A former high school teacher, Dr. Maniacci has over 50 publications, including five textbooks, and has been a core faculty member and instructor at several graduate programs throughout the area*

## **Mr. Ralph Matire**

*Mr. Ralph Martire is the executive director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability and the Rubloff Professor of Public Policy at Roosevelt University. He has played a key role in major Illinois reforms, including the Evidence-Based Model of school funding and a state Earned Income Tax Credit. A frequent columnist and media commentator, Martire serves on multiple state commissions, including Governor-elect J.B. Pritzker's Transition Team and Mayor Brandon Johnson's Chicago Fiscal Sustainability Working Group.*

## **Dr. Brenden Mason**

*Dr. Brenden Mason is the Associate Professor of Economics at North Central College. He teaches courses on Macroeconomics, Money & Banking, Financial Economics, and International Economics. His current research focuses on how economic agents respond to restrictions on interest rates in credit markets; cash usage and the phenomenon of dollarization; and the links between the formal and informal economy. He holds a PhD in Economics from Temple University*

## **Dr. Jennifer McNabb**

*Dr. Jennifer McNabb is Professor and Head of the Department of History at the University of Northern Iowa. A specialist in early modern European and English history, she has authored courses for The Great Courses and published widely on family, gender, and society. She serves as a Councilor in the Professional Division of the American Historical Association and president of the Midwest Conference on British Studies.*

## **Dr. Caitlin Mercier**

*Dr. Caitlin Mercier is an Assistant Professor at Illinois State University where she teaches and researches psychological consequences of colorism (skin tone bias) and racism. She has published in leading journals on counseling, teaching and learning, and health psychology, and regularly presents her work to regional, national, and international audiences. Dr. Mercier has dedicated her expertise to promote socially just practices and efforts to address colorism in all contexts, including education, social policy, and health settings*

## **Ms. Tiffany Middleton**

*Ms. Tiffany Middleton is a manager of program and research in the American Bar Association's Division for Public Education. She oversees initiatives such as Law Day, the Gavel Awards, Insights on Law & Society, and "Lessons on the Law." A historian, she holds degrees from Capital University and Case Western Reserve University.*

## **Mr. Tom Murray**

*Mr. Tom Murray is a retired social studies teacher and founder of the DuPage County Law Education Workshop for Teachers and worked for 12 years as Project Evaluator on three successive Teaching American History federal grants.. He graduated from Western Illinois University with a B.A. in American History. He earned his M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction from Chicago State University and in Law Policy & Criminal Justice from the University of Illinois at Chicago.*

## **Chief Philip Norton**

*Chief Philip Norton has served the Glen Ellyn Police Department since 1986 and has been chief since 2001. A graduate of Northwestern's Police Staff & Command and the FBI National Academy, he is active in regional public safety organizations and community service initiatives.*

## **Dr. Febe Pamonag**

*Dr. Febe Pamonag is Professor of History at Western Illinois University. Her research focuses on modern Japan, women's movements, public health, and food history in Asia. She has published widely, including work on women's activism in the Philippines under U.S. colonial rule, and has a forthcoming book from the University of Illinois Press. Pamonag brings rich comparative perspectives to teaching modern East and Southeast Asia.*

## **Ms. Teresa Rioux**

*Ms. Teresa Rioux is a DuPage County public defender with prior experience in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. She has handled high-profile cases and regularly speaks to students about defense work, due process, and justice system inequities.*

## **Dr. Tim Roberts**

*Dr. Tim Roberts is chair of the Department of History at Western Illinois University. He teaches courses on the early United States, the history of American law, and the Civil War era. He has published books on American responses to the 1848 Revolutions, the history of the idea of American exceptionalism, and the Civil War's impact on a military family of Lewistown, Illinois. He is currently writing a book about the role of Algeria in Franco-American relations.*

## **Dr. Rex (RJ) Rowley**

*Dr. Rex (RJ) Rowley is a Professor of Geography in the Department of Geography, Geology and the Environment at Illinois State University. Dr. Rowley has a B.S. in geography from Brigham Young University, and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in geography from the University of Kansas. At ISU, he teaches GIS, National Parks Geography, Human Geography, Maps and Society, World Geography and field classes to explore cultural landscapes in the American Southwest and Japan.*

## **Dr. Steven D. Schwinn**

*Dr. Steven D. Schwinn is a professor of law at the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law. He teaches, writes, and speaks widely on constitutional law and human rights and he edits the Constitutional Law Prof Blog and the American Constitution Society Supreme Court Review. He contributes regularly to the ABA Preview of United States Supreme Court Cases and other legal publications.*

## **Ms. Shobhana Johri Verma**

*Ms. Shobhana Johri Verma is the Executive Director of the South Asian American Policy & Research Institute (SAAPRI). A trusted leader in the South Asian American community, Shobhana continues to advance research, advocacy, and coalition-building efforts on a wide range of human rights and social justice issues in Chicago and beyond through her work. , Shobhana has held roles as a journalist, educator, and researcher, with a strong focus on advocating for environmental justice, immigrant rights, gender equity, and support for survivors of sexual exploitation, trafficking, and domestic violence.*

## **Dr. Charles Wheelan**

*Dr. Charles Wheelan teaches at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth. He holds a Ph.D. in public policy from the University of Chicago, a Master's in Public Affairs from Princeton University, and a B.A. from Dartmouth College. He is a former correspondent for The Economist and the author of numerous books, including Naked Economics, Naked Money, and Naked Statistics. He is also the author of The Centrist Manifesto, a book that grew out of his experience as a candidate for Congress in Chicago in 2009. He is the founder and chair emeritus of Unite America, a non-partisan movement working to put voters first by fostering a more representative and functional government.*

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**To our speakers for sharing their time and talents with us. We are sincerely grateful that they are willing to be part of our conference. It is because of them that we have such an excellent program to offer.**

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