

THE PREMIER VIRGINIA TECH MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE

# Raise a Glass to Freedom: Revolution in the Colonies

FEBRUARY 2ND, 2024 - FEBRUARY 4TH, 2024

CRISIS COMMITTEE | BLACKSBURG, VA





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## Dear Delegates of VTMUNC I,

We appreciate your participation and dedication to the premier Virginia Tech Model United Nations Conference's efforts to promote productive and civil discourse and conversation. Nevertheless, please be warned that some presentations, discussions, and or information found in the background guides may contain delicate or triggering material. At Virginia Tech, we prioritize fostering a safe and inclusive environment, so we want to ensure that you are prepared for the nature of the discussions to occur.

That being said, the following content areas may contain sensitive material:

- 1. Conflict Zones & Human Rights Violations:** Some conversations may involve sensitive global problems including human rights violations, armed conflicts, and or other difficult themes.
- 2. Sensitive Cultural or Religious Topics:** Some topics may raise sensitive cultural or religious issues for individuals.
- 3. Violence and Trauma:** In their speeches or resolutions, delegates may reference incidents of violence, trauma, or abuse in real-world scenarios that may potentially be a sensitive topic to delegates in committee.
- 4. Discussions about Discrimination and Marginalization:** Emotionally intense discussions concerning discrimination, marginalization, or inequity may arise during committee.

As you prepare for the conference, we encourage all of our delegates to approach these discussions with both respect and empathy for differing perspectives. If the content of these committees is something that you are uncomfortable with, we recommend that you take the appropriate steps to prioritize your well-being, such as seeking support from conference staff or Secretariat of VTMUNC I.

Bound by the motto Ut Prosim (That I May Serve), we serve to ensure that we will promote constructive and respectful dialogue during committee sessions. As you prepare and participate in the conference, we promise that VTMUNC I will stay committed to creating a space where all your voices are heard and are welcome.

Thank you for your compassion and cooperation to our goal of respectful and intellectual discourse for all. We hope that as you progress with our conference, you continue to bloom.

Sincerely,

**Aaryan Menon, Secretary General of VTMUNC I**

**Shriya Chemudupati, Under-Secretary General of General Assemblies of VTMUNC I**

**Madeline Pedersen, Under-Secretary General of Specialized Agencies of VTMUNC I**

**Juan Camilo Bonilla, Under-Secretary General of Crisis Committees of VTMUNC I**



## CONFERENCE GUIDELINES

The first iteration of the Virginia Tech Model United Nations Conference, otherwise known as VTMUNC I, is committed to providing a safe and pleasurable experience for all delegates, advisors, and individuals involved with VTMUNC I. Although participating in Model UN is being involved in competitive activity, its fundamental purpose is to uphold and put into practice both the principles of diplomacy, collaboration, and cooperation. Any individual that violates the policies and procedures of VTMUNC I and the ideals of an open and inclusive environment will be subject to disciplinary action from the staff of VTMUNC I; disciplinary action may include a warning or being disqualified from receiving awards. Promoting an environment that is open to all by being safe, equitable, and exhilarating is our utmost priority. In order to ensure this, the following are **prohibited**:

1. Any pre-writing or working on committee content outside of VTMUNC I committee sessions (as described by the Schedule of Program).
2. Any speeches, directives, crisis arcs, or actions in committee that intend to create violence or promote a violent environment to a specific group of people, including mentions of sexual violence, graphic violence, and other behavior that is beyond committee guidelines.
3. Any hate speech, written documents, or behavior that uses language that is discriminatory and disrespectful, including but not limited to any language that is racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic, antisemitic, Islamophobic, or language harmful to any specific group.
4. Any actions that are deliberate, both knowingly and intentionally, to bully, harass, or otherwise harmful behavior that may or has hurt other delegates' physical and or mental health.



## BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CRISIS COMMITTEES

As the wise and bright minds of the world engage with knowledge of the unknown, new and innovative ways of thinking start to dominate the world. Said ways of thinking make the world what it is today: a cocktail of organized chaos or, what we like to call it, organized crisis. Unlike any conventional committee in the Model UN Circuit, Crisis Committees are unique spaces of debate which consist of continuous cycles of debate filled with uncertainty and, in the process, crisis. Their procedure differs from the procedure that committees in the General Assembly manage, having no formal motions to open debate nor speaker's lists to depend on. This causes crisis committees to resort to 3 styles of debate, which are:

1. Round Robins are a style of debate in which each delegate has a stipulated amount of time to express their opinions/thoughts with respect to the current crisis situation. The delegate proposing the motion to round robin will have the right to stipulate the amount of time each delegate has to speak (equally). It is recommended that round robins be executed at the beginning of the committee or when there are major crisis updates throughout the committee.
2. Moderated Caucuses consist of a specific topic of discussion, a duration, and a speaking time per delegate. These will have chairs individually calling delegates to speak in the debate, be a default if the chair doesn't exercise a round robin motion, and managed in continuous rolling cycles throughout the debate.
3. Unmoderated Caucuses, on the other hand, are a style of debate which focuses more on free discussion and flow of debate between delegates without a necessity to conduct a motion to structure speech. Delegates will have full autonomy of how much times they speak in the unmoderated caucus and will be able to chat with other delegates relative to the topic being discussed.

# CHAIR'S LETTER

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the first annual Virginia Tech High School Model United Nations Conference (also known as VTMUNC I)! We are so happy that you have chosen to be a part of this conference, and of our committee. My name is Liz Mennitt, and I am your Head Chair for the American Revolution Crisis Committee. I am currently a senior majoring in political science here at Virginia Tech, and I am also in my second semester of an accelerated master's degree program in political science. Some of my academic interests are political and international relations theory, specifically critical theory, and the role that gender plays in narratives surrounding international conflicts. Outside of class, I love to paint, hike, and read (fantasy is my favorite). I did Model UN in high school and throughout college. My favorite Model UN memory is spending a weekend in Chicago during my junior year for a Model UN conference at the University of Chicago. I had such a great time, and made so many memories. I hope that you all share that experience during your weekend at Virginia Tech for VTMUNC I.

If you have prior Model United Nations experience, or if this is your first conference, we are all very glad that you are here. We know that you have all put in a great amount of effort to prepare and come to this conference, and this means the world to us. We are so excited to see each and every one of you debate and collaborate to solve the various crises presented to you in this committee. The nature of this historical crisis committee will require you to think creatively, and to reexamine a history that occurred almost two and a half centuries ago. The American Revolution Crisis Committee is a historical crisis committee that will ask delegates to handle various crises surrounding the war, and the future of the thirteen colonies and the various European empires who may benefit from seeing the colonies become independent, or absorbed into their empire. While we know that the American Revolution is likely something you have all studied in your history classes, we want you all to know that once the committee starts, and crises are presented, you will have to rewrite the history as you know it. We urge you to use your historical knowledge, and the information in this background guide to help you think about and navigate these crises through the lens of the historical context that you are familiar with. We hope that this committee will push you to be intuitive, creative, and resourceful. We look forward to seeing you work together, create elaborate arcs in the backroom, and overcome what is thrown at you. We have worked hard to provide you with the best experience possible, and we would like you to know that you may reach out to us at any time with any questions or concerns.

Best of luck,

Elizabeth Mennitt | Head Chair | [lizmennitt@vt.edu](mailto:lizmennitt@vt.edu) | Elena Roe | Co-Chair | Daniel Cook | Crisis Director

RAISE A GLASS TO FREEDOM: REVOLUTION IN THE COLONIES  
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# COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

The root of the American revolution can be traced back to a succession of British policies designed to tighten control and extract revenue from the colonies. One of the reasons that England needed to extract money from the colonies was because of the huge financial costs that came from the French and Indian War, which concluded in 1763. England claimed that the French and Indian war was fought to protect the colonies from the encroachment of the French from Canada and the Mississippi River valley. The British taxed the colonists to repay funds lost in the war as they claimed the war was fought for their protection. However, it can be argued that the war was truly the North American side of a greater imperial war between the British and French empires.

The Sugar Act (1764), and the subsequent Stamp Act (1765) imposed taxes on goods that were necessities for the colonists. After these two acts, a variety of others were placed on the colonies for the purpose of monetary extraction from the colonists. Out of these acts came the notorious phrase “no taxation without representation,” as these acts were placed upon the colonies who had no representation in the British Parliament, the governing body that created the laws within the colonies. The Townshend Acts (1767) and the Tea Act (1773) escalated tensions, with events like the Boston Massacre (1770) and the Boston Tea Party (1773) becoming symbolic acts of resistance. As discontent intensified, colonial leaders convened the First Continental Congress in 1774 to address grievances and coordinate resistance. Rejecting British policies, the Congress endorsed non-importation agreements and established the Continental Association to enforce boycotts. This marked the beginning of armed conflict as the clash of ideologies between colonial aspirations and imperial authority reached a critical juncture.

This is a depiction of the Boston Tea Party on March 5, 1770. Colonists, enraged by the high taxes on imported tea, rebelled against the British government by throwing imported tea into the Boston Harbor.



Intellectually, the American Revolution was inspired by the Enlightenment movement of the late 17th and 18th century. This philosophical movement began in Europe, and slowly made its way to the American colonies. Shifting emphasis away from absolute authority, both religious and political, and placing emphasis on individual rights, the social contract, and the pursuit of happiness, deeply influenced American political thought. This movement had significant influence on American thinkers, specifically Thomas Paine, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin. The influence of this philosophical movement can be seen most notably in Thomas Paine's Common Sense, an influential pamphlet published in 1775-1776 that outlined the need for American independence from England and the creation of a democratic republic in the American colonies.

As discontent rose, colonial leaders convened the First Continental Congress in 1774 to address grievances and coordinate organized resistance. The congress endorsed non-importation agreements and established the Continental Association to enforce boycotts on imported goods. The First Continental Congress marked the first significant, organized clash of ideologies between colonial aspirations for freedom and liberty, and British imperial authority. Simmering animosity lingering from the French loss in the French and Indian War fueled French support for the American cause, at least for the most part. The Revolutionary War presented indigenous peoples with a dilemma as both sides sought their support. Some aligned with the British, viewing them as a lesser threat to their territories than westward-expanding colonists. Others sided with the patriots, hoping for more favorable treatment. Regardless, the war brought about disruptions and encroachments on indigenous lands, leaving a lasting impact on their communities. The paradox of advocating for liberty while holding slaves added complexity to the revolutionary fervor. While some enslaved individuals fought for the promise of freedom offered by both sides, the tension between the call for liberty and the institution of slavery remained glaring. The official armed conflict began in April 1775 with the battles of Lexington and Concord, marking the inception of the struggle for independence.

## KEY TERMS

**Cherokee:** Indigenous tribe that was located in what is now the southeastern part of the United States (Carolinas, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama), allied to the British.

**Chickasaw:** Indigenous tribe that was located in the southeastern woodlands of the current United States (Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, Tennessee). The Chickasaw generally supported the British.

**Choctaw:** Indigenous tribe that was located in modern day Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Patriot Allies.

**Continental Army:** The official army of the American patriots (The United States). The Continental Army was established at the Second Continental Congress in 1775.

**Continental Congress:** A group of representatives from each colony that eventually became the initial governing body of the United States.

**Federalist:** Describing a system of government in which the states are located under a central authority.



**Loyalists:** Those loyal to King George III and England. Also known as Tories, Royalists, or King's Men.

**Mohawk:** among the four Iroquois; had a long trading relationship with the British and hoped to gain support to prohibit colonists from encroaching into their territory in the Mohawk Valley.

**Oath of Allegiance:** An oath given by citizens and soldiers in support of either the Patriot cause or the Royal government to declare support. These oaths were often used as evidence of betrayal of one side for execution.

**Patriots:** American colonists who rejected British rule. Also called Whigs.

**Thirteen Colonies:** The original 13 states present at the time of the American Revolution. Included New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

**Map of the thirteen colonies at the time of the Revolutionary War**



# TIMELINE

**1754-1756:** French and Indian War - also known as the Seven Years' War, pitted the British against the French alongside various Native tribes in a conflict over territory

**June 19- July 11, 1754:** The Albany Congress - meeting of representatives from 7 of the British colonies; discussed relations with the Native Americans and defensive measures against French presence in Canada

**1764- 1765:** Sugar Act, Stamp Act, Quartering Act - British regulations in the U.S. colonies that spurred dissent among the colonists, particularly merchants

**June 15- July 2, 1767:** Townshend Acts - taxes imposed on goods like glass, lead, paper, paint, and tea; prompted colonial boycott of British goods

**March 5, 1770:** Boston Massacre - street fight between patriot "mob" and British soldiers that resulted in the deaths of several colonists, prompted a call to arms among revolutionary writers and speakers

**May 10, 1773:** The Tea Act - facilitated the direct sale of tea from the British East India Company to colonists, undercutting merchants; came with increased tax on tea

**December 16, 1773:** The Boston Tea Party - political protest by the Sons of Liberty who boarded British ships in Boston Harbor and threw crates of tea into the ocean.

**March-June 1774:** Intolerable (Coercive) Acts - series of laws passed by the British Parliament to punish the colonists for the Boston Tea Party (including the closing of Boston Harbor)

**September 5, 1774:** First Continental Congress - meeting of colonial leaders to determine the terms of a boycott/response to the Intolerable Acts

**March 23, 1775:** Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death" speech - speech was given by Patrick Henry on March 23, 1775, in response to interference of the Royal Navy brought in from the King's appointed Governor, Lord Dunmore; called for the Virginia colony to raise a militia in order to defend their right to freedom



**April 18-19, 1775:** Paul Revere's Ride and The Battle of Lexington and Concord - On the evening of April 18, 1775, Dr. Joseph Warren summoned Paul Revere and gave him the task of riding to Lexington, Massachusetts, with the news that British soldiers stationed in Boston were about to march into the countryside northwest of the town.

**May 10, 1775:** Second Continental Congress - meeting of colonial delegates that established American independence from British colonial rule.

**June 17, 1775:** Battle of Bunker Hill - early Revolutionary battle in which the Patriots sustained significant losses, but also inflicted great amounts of casualties against the British forces, boosting morale during the Siege of Boston.

**January 15, 1776:** Thomas Paine's Common Sense published - Pamphlet widely distributed amongst the colonial masses that argued for American independence and the creation of a democratic republic.

**July 4, 1776:** Declaration of Independence is adopted by Congress - formally established colonial independence.

**July 5, 1777:** Fort Ticonderoga surrendered to British Control - critical fortress with strategic access to Canada/supply lines; uncontested surrender highly controversial and unpopular, contributed to Phillip Schuyler's loss of command to Horatio Gates.

**July 27, 1777:** Lafayette arrives in Philadelphia - Marquis de Lafayette, a French military officer, arrives from France and is commissioned into the Continental Army

## CHARACTERS LIST

### PATRIOTS

**Patrick Henry:** Spokesperson for American independence before the American Revolution. Famous for "Give me liberty or give me death" speech. Inspired many American colonists in support of the revolution.

**John Paul Jones:** Patriot naval officer during the American Revolution who commanded the Navy of the colonies. Often referred to as the "Father of the United States Navy."

**George Washington:** Commander and Chief of the Continental Army, answerable only to the continental congress, and in control of all of the American colonies land armies.



**Alexander Hamilton:** Hamilton fought in the war first as an inexperienced private in a volunteer militia, later as a battle-tested commander in the Continental Army, and finally as the aide-de-camp of General George Washington.

**Salem Poor:** Salem Poor was an African-American former enslaved man who purchased his freedom, became a soldier, and rose to fame as a war hero during the Battle of Bunker Hill during the American Revolution. Poor famously killed British Lieutenant Colonel James Abercrombie and several British soldiers at the Battle of Bunker Hill, and became famous after 14 major generals spoke about his heroism.

**Abigail Adams:** Wife to American Revolutionary, lawyer, and politician John Adams, Abigail Adams famously corresponded with her husband reminding him to “remember the ladies” in the formation of the new American government, or they would engage in a revolution of their own. Abigail Adams was a prominent influence to women and the general public at the time, and was a key political advisor to her husband.

**Marquis de Lafayette:** French military officer who currently aiding George Washington and the Continental Army. Lafayette had 6,000 French troops at his disposal in the colonies. Lafayette defied the explicit orders of King Louis XVI, who did not want to provoke the British by joining the war, and traveled to the colonies to aid the Americans in 1777.

## LOYALISTS

**General Sir Henry Clinton:** Arriving in Boston in 1775, Clinton became the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army during the Revolutionary War. He was a skilled general, but received much criticism throughout the war for his failure to provide aid to British soldiers in various campaigns.

**General Wilhelm Knyphausen:** Commander of multiple troops of British-allied mercenaries, Knyphausen came to America in 1776 to fight in the Revolutionary War with Britain.

**George Germain:** British Secretary of State to the British Colonies in America, Germain was in charge of the organizational side of the war against the American Revolution. He is answerable only to King George III. He currently resides in London, England.

**General Charles Cornwallis:** Second in command of the British Army to Henry Clinton, Cornwallis was a skilled general and leader of British forces.



**Thayendanegea (Joseph Brant):** Mohawk military and political leader who negotiated the address of Indigenous grievances by the British government in exchange for Native support of the British army/Loyalists during the Revolutionary War.

**Cornplanter:** prominent military chief of the Seneca Tribe, who sided with the British in the Revolutionary War.

**General William Howe:** Replaced General Thomas Gage to direct the war effort in the British assault on New York in 1776.

### **UNDEFINED ALLIANCES**

**Benedict Arnold:** American colonist who betrayed the Patriots and defected to the British in exchange for money to pay his debts.

**Major John Andre:** British Major John Andre joined with American General Patience Lovell Wright: America's first professional sculptor, known for her unconventional manners and methods. Lived in England, but smuggled information on British strategy to the Continental Army.

**Anna Strong:** member of the Culper Spy Ring in Setauket, NY during the Revolutionary War. Provided crucial intelligence to the Continental Army.

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

Each character has a unique background and history. What are their motivations? Would they benefit from a British or American victory? Would some other result best serve them?

Alliances play a huge role in the Revolution. What alliances can you make, no matter how unexpected, to change the course of history?

The geography of the thirteen colonies is vastly different throughout. How can you take advantage of this? Economies of the colonies are also regional. How might this affect the behavior of different colonies, as their economies often depend on agricultural exports?



# PERSPECTIVES

“BROTHERS AND FRIENDS! We desire you will hear and receive what we have now told you, and that you will open a good ear and listen to what we are now going to say. This is a family quarrel between us and Old England. You Indians are not concerned about it. We don't wish you to take up the hatchet against the king's troops. We desire you to remain at home, and not join either side, but keep the hatchet buried deep.” This excerpt from the Speech to the Six Nations is a request made by the Patriots to the Iroquois and perfectly highlights their perspective towards

indigenous people joining the Revolutionary War. At the outbreak of the war in the 1760's, indigenous people faced a difficult task navigating competing European imperial powers and the new concepts of citizenship, land treaties, and formation of nation-states. Many indigenous people

believed the war was as much an attempt to gain control of more indigenous land as it was for liberty. As the conflict continued to escalate indigenous groups had to choose whether to ally with the loyalists or the patriots, or to try and remain neutral. Groups such as the Cherokee and the

Mohawk believed that England's attempt to restrict westward expansion with the Royal Proclamation of 1763 meant that their best hope for continued independence was to ally with the loyalists. However, other groups such as the Stockbridge band of the Mohican tribe were

convinced that assisting the Patriots in their fight for independence would earn them a seat at the

table when it came time to discuss the borders and authority of the newly independent government. Still more tribal groups, like the Shawnees of the Ohio Valley, worked hard to remain neutral, assisting both sides equally or closing their borders entirely. Yet, throughout all of this, prejudice towards indigenous people persisted among the western colonists and hunters.

During the 1770's, France was one of Europe's major powers. Having ceded control of huge swathes of their American colonies to England and Spain after their loss of the Seven Years War in 1763, French influence over the new world was severely limited. However, the country still had a strong army and navy at its disposal. Louis XVI, France's young king, and his court looked to America for its adoption of new Enlightenment ideas and for any way to undermine the British. Benjamin Franklin was the first to elicit French support for the Revolution, organizing shipments of weapons, equipment, and uniforms. In 1778, France and the newly formed United States formalized their alliance with the Treaty of Alliance. Many independent Frenchmen, such as Marquis de Lafayette, traveled to America to join the war effort. It was thanks to this support that the Revolution was able to secure important victories like the Battle of Yorktown in 1781. African Americans played a key role on both sides of the Revolution. Just like the Patriots, they were excited by the ideas of personal liberty and freedom. However, unlike the Patriots, many African Americans weren't looking for freedom from England, but from the slave owners that prospered from their labor.



The Loyalists actively recruited slaves owned by the Patriots and because of this were more successful in recruiting African American soldiers. Many African Americans did fight for the Patriots though. Over 5,000 men served in the Continental Army and at sea. However, according to an article by Legends of America, “General George Washington ended recruiting African Americans, and on November 12, 1775, he issued orders prohibiting all black men from serving in the Continental Army. In response, the Governor of Virginia — Lord Dunmore, offered freedom to all slaves willing to serve with the British. Washington immediately changed his position and ordered all recruiters to enlist any black men who wanted to fight.” This quote perfectly illustrates how vital African American support was for both sides. The actions of Lord Dunmore are considered one of the first steps towards complete Emancipation.

Women also played a critical role during the Revolutionary War, performing domestic tasks, nursing the wounded, and bringing food, messages, and supplies to the soldiers. They even fought, if necessary. Mary Ludwig Hays brought exhausted soldiers water from a local well during the Battle of 1778, but when her husband was shot during an attack she replaced him at the artillery and fired into the British. Women also played a key role influencing the policies and ideas of the Revolutionary Army and the fledgling government. Abigail Adams, the wife of Massachusetts Congressional Delegate John Adams, famously wrote to him reminding him to “remember the ladies” in this new government or they would start a revolution themselves. Women chronicled the war and wrote pieces about the importance of freedom and independence, inspiring others to join the cause and giving people pause to think about their own beliefs and standing in the world. Without their support, the harsh conditions of the battlefield would have been drastically worse.

## CRISIS SITUATION

It is the August of 1777, and it has been about two years since the American Colonies wrote and passed the Declaration of Independence at the meeting of the Second Continental Congress. The Revolutionary war is in its earliest stages, and battles have broken out already in the past year at Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill. The Continental Army has been established for only a year, and the army still appears somewhat disorganized and battles have not reached an entirely large scale yet. Though the Revolutionary War was fought primarily by the opposing American Continental and British Armies, there are other parties that have stakes in this war. The American Colonies cannot be successful without aid from allies, potentially the French and indigenous tribes.

As the war begins to unfold, will the British squash the revolution of the self-proclaimed independent American Colonists? Can the American patriots defend their brand new republic? How will other actors, such as European powers, loyalist colonists, indigenous people, impact and intervention in the conflict? It is up to this crisis committee to determine the course of the American Revolution, and decide the fate of the establishment of the independent United States of America.



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## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/american-revolution-faqs>

<https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/american-revolution-history> Thomas

Paine’s Common Sense pamphlet:  
[https://www.sjsu.edu/people/ruma.chopra/courses/H174\\_MW\\_F12/s1/Wk7\\_A.pdf](https://www.sjsu.edu/people/ruma.chopra/courses/H174_MW_F12/s1/Wk7_A.pdf)

