



DELAWARE

HUMANITIES

Community Conversations

CATALOGUE

2025

What is a Community Conversation?

Exploring ideas through conversation with others is an important way for people to think about the relationship between what they believe and how they act in the world.

A Community Conversation encourages people to listen respectfully to different viewpoints and engage with issues that affect our communities. Unlike a lecture-style program, a Community Conversation involves the active participation of all audience members throughout the program. Guided by a trained conversation leader, participants explore why they think what they do, share stories with one another, build trust, and find common ground.

How It Works

Delaware Humanities trains conversation leaders to facilitate 90-minute conversations on specific topics. Organizations then request to host these conversations with support from Delaware Humanities.

The host organization pays a fee (discounted for non-profits) to Delaware Humanities. Delaware Humanities covers the conversation leader's honorarium and mileage to the host site (if applicable).

Applying for a Conversation

First, an interested host organization should contact the conversation leader for their chosen conversation topic directly to arrange a time and format that works for the conversation leader's schedule. Then, after contacting the conversation leader, the host organization should apply for the conversation through Delaware Humanities.

**Follow the detailed steps on our website to apply:
dehumanities.org/programs/community-conversations**

Whose Dream Is It? Defining and Participating in the American Dream

LED BY RAFFI ANDONIAN

DESCRIPTION:

The American Dream holds a powerful place in our collective imagination. When did this idea come about and how did we come to define it? Our disagreements on the policies and ideals for our society are often rooted in different understandings and experiences about this country's promise. In this conversation, we'll reflect on the roots of our own notions and others around us so we may better understand each other in a way that's more meaningful and constructive.



CONVERSATION LEADER:

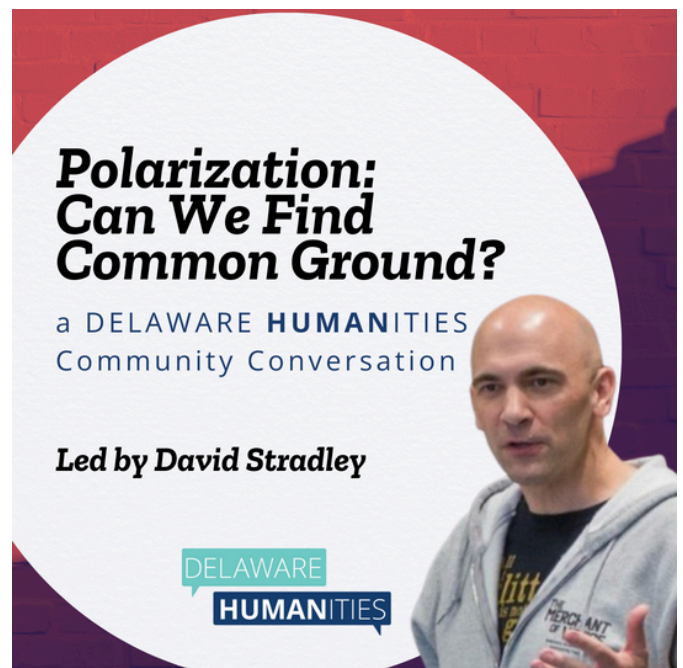
Raffi Andonian is TV's "Celebrity Historian" with 150 guest appearances on ABC-CBS-FOX-NBC stations across the country. He is also the producer and host of an AppleTV show, Clio The Muse, which encourages viewers to "challenge the present by inquiring the past." Raffi is the author of 3 history books, and has spoken at Oxford, Cambridge, NASDAQ, humanities councils, and universities. He also teaches at the college level at Harris Stowe State University (HBCU) and for the public through North Dakota Humanities Council. Raffi began his career at the Gettysburg battlefield, the Martin Luther King birth home, and Los Alamos NM where the atomic bomb was created. Today, he leads private tours and an employee engagement program.

Polarization: Can We Find Common Ground?

LED BY DAVID STRADLEY

DESCRIPTION:

Recent data shows that Americans report feeling more polarized than ever. In today's political climate, we may feel there is a wide gulf between ourselves and our fellow citizens, colleagues, community members, or loved ones. How do we talk with people who may hold views that differ steeply from our own? In this conversation, we'll explore our associations with polarization, consider our own discomforts and barriers, and find ways to meet one another on common ground.



CONVERSATION LEADER:

David Stradley has twenty years of experience connecting a broad mix of Delawareans to ideas and to each other. David moved to the First State in 2002 for a position at Delaware Theatre Company, where he directed productions, developed audience engagement events, and ran educational programs. From 2011-2023, he served as Producing Artistic Director of Delaware Shakespeare, launching the Community Tour, which shares free theatre with the full spectrum of humanity in our state by traveling to locations such as prisons, homeless shelters, and community centers. David has just started a new role as Director of Membership and Community Engagement with the Local Journalism Initiative. He lives in Claymont with his wife and son.

Sitting with Discomfort: Self-Kindness in a Complicated World

LED BY HEATHER KLEMANSKI

DESCRIPTION:

How do we find ways to take care of ourselves? Recent studies show that Americans report feeling more stressed than ever. In our complicated world, patience, understanding, and support may feel far away. We may find it difficult to practice empathy and understanding not only towards others, but towards ourselves. In this conversation, we'll navigate the complexities of inner struggles and work towards cultivating self-compassion.



CONVERSATION LEADER:

Heather Klemanski is the founder of "Inner Mean Girl Intervention" and a passionate Self-Love Specialist and dedicated guide in dismantling barriers of shame, fear, doubt, and negative self-talk. With expertise in mindful self-compassion and safe space facilitation, Heather adeptly unravels the layers of the inner "mean girl." Her mission centers on fostering self-kindness, courage, and joy within professional women and heart-centered organizations, guiding them to bravely uncover authentic voices. Her specialty lies in building communities fueled by support and understanding, making her coaching a transformative journey towards self-love and empowerment.