

Fall Conference Schedule

Friday, November 14 – Additional fees and advance registration apply

- 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM** **Early registration**, Courtyard by Marriott and Middlebury Inn Lobbies
- 12:00 and 2:00 PM** **Robert Frost Interpretive Trail guided walk**, Ripton, limited to two groups of 30 Middlebury College’s English and Environmental Studies Professor John Elder leads two sessions along a 1.2-mile loop annotated with Frost poems. First group departs at noon; second group departs at 2:00 PM. Arrive in lobby 15 minutes prior to departure to secure spot.
- 1:00 – 3:00 PM** **“Frost’s Autumnal Poems,”** Middlebury Inn, limited to 25 Peter Gilbert, VHC Executive Director and Robert Frost’s literary executor, leads a discussion of Frost’s poems about the fall of the year.
- 1:00 – 3:00 PM** **“Writing Under the Influence... of Frost,”** Middlebury Inn, limited to 25 Geof Hewitt, published poet, Vermont College adjunct faculty member, and Vermont Department of Education Consultant, leads this poetry workshop; participants borrow Frost’s voice to compose a poem then discuss ways to revise.
- 5:00 – 7:00 PM** **Registration**, Courtyard by Marriott and Middlebury Inn Lobbies (dinner on own)
- 7:30 PM** **“Stop-Go: Robert Frost’s ‘Directive,’”** Middlebury College, limited to 125 Paul Muldoon, Howard G.B. Clark ’21 Professor in the Humanities, Princeton University. A close reading of one of the most challenging of Frost’s poems by this 2003 Pulitzer Prize winner for poetry.
- 9:00 PM** **Reception**, Middlebury College

Saturday, November 15 – All events at Middlebury College

- 7:00 AM** **Registration and continental breakfast**, Sunderland Language Center
- 8:30 AM** **Welcome**, Sunderland Language Center Timothy B. Spears, Acting Provost, Professor of American Studies, Middlebury College; Peter Gilbert, VHC Executive Director; Lesley Lee Francis, granddaughter of Robert Frost; Thomas Giffin, VHC Board Chair; presentation of Victor R. Swenson Humanities Educator Award
- 9:15 AM** **“Robert Frost and the Nature of New England,”** Jay Parini, D. E. Axinn Professor of English and Creative Writing, Middlebury College
- 10:15 AM** **Break with refreshments**
- 10:30 AM** **“Frost and the Possession of Landscape,”** Robert Faggen, Barton Evans and H. Andrea Neves Professor of Literature, Claremont McKenna College
- 11:30 AM** **Break and registration open**
- 11:45 AM** **Buffet luncheon**
- 1:15 – 2:30 PM** **Breakout sessions**, Donald Everett Axinn ‘51 Center for Literary and Cultural Studies at Starr Library
- 2:30 PM** **Break with refreshments**, Axinn Center
- 2:45 – 4:00 PM** **Breakout sessions**, Axinn Center
- 4:30 – 5:30 PM** **Closing sessions (choose one of two)**, McCardell Bicentennial Hall **“Robert and Elinor Frost: Education by Poetry,”** Lesley Lee Francis, Frost’s granddaughter and author of *Robert Frost: An Adventure in Poetry, 1900–1918* **“Not of School Age: Frost and the Work of Fathering,”** Donald Sheehy, Professor of English, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

Lodging – Rooms are available at the Middlebury Inn and the Courtyard by Marriott at \$129 (plus tax) single or double on a first-come, first-served basis. Middlebury Inn rate includes breakfast; two consecutive nights at the Inn are \$119 each. For reservations, Middlebury Inn, 800.842.4666; Courtyard by Marriott, 800.388.7775. Check-in: 3:00 PM. Mention the Vermont Humanities Council to receive the conference rate. Conference rate is good November 13-15.

Contact – 802.262.2626 x304 • info@vermonthumanities.org • vermonthumanities.org

Breakout Sessions

Each session runs twice in the afternoon.

Building Robert Frost Collections at

Middlebury College—Get a look at how Middlebury College has built and digitized its Frost collections, including materials related to Frost’s connection to the Bread Loaf School of English—in photographs, manuscripts, recorded lectures and readings, and journal excerpts from former Bread Loaf director, Reginald “Doc” Cook. **Led by:** Andrew Wentink, Curator of Special Collections & Archives

The Force of the Deadlock: The Contradictions

of Frost’s Notebooks—Faggen shares the contradictions and tensions he discovered while editing *The Notebooks of Robert Frost*, and how considering them encourages the reader to stay unassuming in understanding the poet. **Led by:** Robert Faggen, Barton Evans and H. Andrea Neves Professor of Literature, Claremont McKenna College

The Higher Satisfactions of Frost’s Prose

—Frost’s prose is unforgettable. What distinguishes his style? If you know about the poetry but very little about Frost’s prose, this session is for you. **Led by:** Mark Richardson, Professor of English, Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan; author of *The Ordeal of Robert Frost: The Poet and the Poetics*; editor of *The Collected Prose of Robert Frost*, and co-editor of *Frost: Collected Poems, Prose, and Plays*

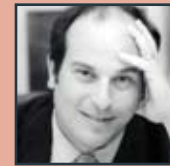
Lyrics to the Song Frost Spoke: His Public

Readings—Frost’s lectures and readings can be looked at as indigenous folksongs, carefully crafted performances, or essential moments in the construction of a poet’s identity. Listen to recordings of these readings then discuss them. Frost called the introductions his “only free-verse poems.” **Led by:** Lisa Seale, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Professor, Department of English, University of Wisconsin; author of essays on Frost’s readings in *The Robert Frost Review* and *The New England Quarterly*

Robert Frost and the “Ministry of Fear”: The Poetic

Response to Science—As science challenged the foundations of ethics and religion, Frost struggled to reconcile his beliefs with a discipline that challenged such beliefs. Eventually seeing science as a historically conditioned construct rather than a literal transcription of nature, Frost overcame his fear of science and accepted its inquiry as a mode of thought equivalent to poetic creativity. **Led by:** Robert Hass, Professor of English, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania; author of *Going by Contraries: Robert Frost’s Conflict with Science, and President of the Robert Frost Society*

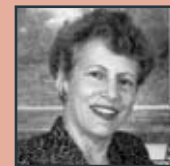
Key Speakers



Robert Faggen

Barton Evans and H. Andrea Neves Professor of Literature and Director of the Gould Center for Humanistic Studies, Claremont McKenna College

Faggen is author of *Robert Frost and the Challenge of Darwin*, and editor of *The Notebooks of Robert Frost*, *The Cambridge Companion to Robert Frost*, *Striving Towards Being: The Letters of Thomas Merton and Czeslaw Milosz*, and *The Selected Poems of Herman Melville*. He is working on *The Collected Letters of Robert Frost* with Mark Richardson and Donald Sheehy.



Lesley Lee Francis

Frost’s granddaughter and author of *Robert Frost: An Adventure in Poetry, 1900–1918*

Retired from the American Association of University Professors, Francis teaches and writes, and lectures on her grandfather. A former professor of Spanish language, literature, and history, she holds a Ph.D. in Romance Languages.



Paul Muldoon

Howard G.B. Clark ’21 Professor in the Humanities, Princeton University

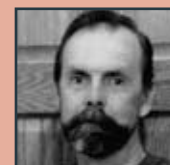
Muldoon, poetry editor for *The New Yorker*, is winner of the Irish Times Poetry Prize, the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, and the Shakespeare Prize. At Princeton, he was the founding Chair of the Lewis Center for the Arts; he was also Professor of Poetry at the University of Oxford. His recent poetry collections include *Moy Sand and Gravel* and *Horse Latitudes*.



Jay Parini

D.E. Axinn Professor of English and Creative Writing, Middlebury College

Parini, author of *Robert Frost: A Life*, is a poet, novelist, and biographer.



Donald Sheehy

Professor of English, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

Sheehy is editor of *Robert Frost: Poems, Life, Legacy*, a multimedia CD-ROM. He is working on a critical edition of Frost’s correspondence (see Robert Faggen bio above).

VHC Fall Conference Registration Form

Conference fee — The \$99 (\$69 student) fee includes Saturday’s programs, continental breakfast, buffet lunch, and snacks. **Friday’s optional activities (afternoon and evening) and the conference text, Robert Frost: A Life by Jay Parini, carry additional fees.** Students and teachers are encouraged to attend; certification letters are available. An on-site bookstore, run by Middlebury College, will be open during the day. Space is limited; registration is first-come, first-served.

Registration and payment deadline is October 24; after the deadline, registrations will be accepted as space is available. **Cancellations:** refund less \$25 fee until October 24; no refund after October 24. A few scholarships are available; deadline is October 17. One person per registration form. Scholarship form and additional materials are available at vermonthumanities.org. Make checks payable to **Vermont Humanities Council** and send to 11 Loomis Street, Montpelier, VT 05602 or fax to 802.262.2620.

First name _____ Last name _____

Mailing address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (day) _____ E-mail _____

First VHC conference? Yes No ____ I am a teacher and need a participation letter for recertification.

Special needs? _____

CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

FRIDAY

- **Afternoon:** ____ Robert Frost Trail Trip (\$12) Circle time: NOON 2:00 PM
OR ____ Frost’s Autumnal Poems (\$8) OR ____ Writing Under the Influence (\$8)
- **Evening:** ____ Stop-Go: Robert Frost’s “Directive” with Paul Muldoon (\$14)

SATURDAY BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Session I (rank preference 1–5)

- _____ Building Robert Frost Collections at Middlebury College
- _____ The Force of the Deadlock
- _____ The Higher Satisfactions of Frost’s Prose
- _____ Lyrics to the Song Frost Spoke
- _____ Robert Frost and the “Ministry of Fear”

Session II (rank preference 1–5)

- _____ Building Robert Frost Collections at Middlebury College
- _____ The Force of the Deadlock
- _____ The Higher Satisfactions of Frost’s Prose
- _____ Lyrics to the Song Frost Spoke
- _____ Robert Frost and the “Ministry of Fear”

Saturday Closing Session (check preference)

- _____ Robert and Elinor Frost: Education by Poetry
- _____ Not of School Age: Frost and the Work of Fathering

REGISTRATION FEES

\$99 registration (\$69 student)	\$ _____
\$8 Robert Frost: A Life, conference text	\$ _____
\$12 Frost Trail Trip in Ripton (Friday afternoon)	\$ _____
\$8 Poetry Discussion or Workshop (Friday afternoon)	\$ _____
\$14 Paul Muldoon Talk (Friday evening)	\$ _____
Conference scholarship donation	\$ _____

Total due \$ _____

Check enclosed for \$ ____ OR charge to (circle) Visa MC Exp. date _____

Card no. _____ Signature _____

Delight and Wisdom:

The Life and Poetry of Robert Frost

Friday and Saturday • November 14–15, 2008
Middlebury College and other Middlebury locations



Robert Frost. The name, not to mention the poetry, is iconic. He won four Pulitzer Prizes, recited a poem at President Kennedy's inauguration, and continues to influence some of today's most respected poets. Yet much of what is believed about Frost today is false. His life and poetry are more complex—and yet deceptively accessible—than the popular story of his life would have us believe. Look behind the icon and discover what makes Robert Frost so fascinating.

The Vermont Humanities Council is pleased to hold its 35th annual fall conference in conjunction with Middlebury College. Frost taught at Middlebury College's Bread Loaf School of English for 42 years; he also helped found the annual Bread Loaf Writer's Conference. Our conference examines Frost's biography and broad body of work—in addition to his poetry, his prose, notebooks, public talks, and thoughts on parenting, education, and science—to get past the popular, but often incorrect, image of the poet.

Three optional, space-limited events on Friday afternoon open the conference: a walk-and-talk on the **Robert Frost Interpretive Trail** in Ripton led by Middlebury professor John Elder; a **discussion of Frost's autumnal poems** with VHC executive director and Frost literary executor Peter Gilbert; and a **poetry-writing workshop** based on Frost poems with Vermont poet Geof Hewitt.

Friday evening's optional/limited seating event features celebrated poet **Paul Muldoon**, winner of the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for poetry. Perhaps the foremost Irish poet of his generation, Muldoon will deliver a talk entitled "**Stop-Go: Robert Frost's 'Directive,'**" on one of the most challenging of Frost's poems. A reception will follow the talk.

On Saturday, Middlebury professor and Frost biographer **Jay Parini** will give the opening plenary address, "**Robert Frost and the Nature of New England.**" (A copy of Parini's *Robert Frost: A Life* is the conference text and available to all participants at cost.) **Robert Faggen**, Claremont McKenna College professor and author of *The Notebooks of Robert Frost*, follows with a talk on "**Frost and the Possession of Landscape.**"

Breakout sessions will run twice in the afternoon. They explore the college's Frost special collections; Frost's notebooks, public talks, and published prose; and Frost's poetic responses to scientific thought.

Two closing sessions look at **Frost and parenting** from alternate viewpoints. **Lesley Lee Francis**, granddaughter of the poet, will share her assessment of Robert and Elinor Frost's "Education by Poetry" of their young children. **Donald Sheehy**, professor of English at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, will examine the true nature of Frost as father to his adult children.



Photo credits from top to bottom: Robert Frost, 1941, by Fred Palumbo; Elinor and Frost, 1928; and Frost in England, 1913, by Edward Sweetland.

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Delight and Wisdom:
The Life and Poetry of
Robert Frost

Fall Conference 2008
November 14–15

VERMONT HUMANITIES COUNCIL PRESENTS,
IN COLLABORATION WITH MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE:

DELIGHT AND WISDOM: The Life and Poetry of Robert Frost



Dartmouth College Library

VERMONT HUMANITIES COUNCIL'S
35TH ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

November 14–15, 2008

Friday Afternoon and Saturday

Middlebury College and
other Middlebury Locations

