1st Wednesdays
Humanities Lecture Series
October 2015–May 2016
FREE PUBLIC TALKS
At Libraries around Vermont

Vermont Humanities
Hosted by nine libraries around Vermont
7:00 PM on First Wednesdays
October 2015 through May 2016

- Brattleboro
- Essex Junction
- Manchester
- Middlebury
- Montpelier
- Norwich
- Rutland
- Newport
- St. Johnsbury

First Wednesdays is sponsored statewide by
- National Life Group Foundation
- Vermont Department of Libraries

Events marked Latino Americans: 500 Years of History are supported by a public programming initiative produced by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the American Library Association (ALA), as part of an NEH initiative, *The Common Good: The Humanities in the Public Square*.

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Vermont Humanities Council
11 Loomis Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05602
vermonthumanities.org, 802.262.2626

PHOTO CREDITS

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**Brattleboro 1st Wednesdays**

**OCTOBER 7 • Ilan Stavans**
The Legacy of Cesar Chavez

The legacy of Cesar Chavez, arguably the most important Latino leader of the twentieth century, has been marred by controversy. Ilan Stavans, editor of Chavez's collected speeches, reflects on Chavez's influence and place in history. A Latino Americans: 500 Years of History program.

**NOVEMBER 4 • Paul Whalen**
Face to Face with the Emotional Brain

Whether one is sitting around the caveman's fire or the conference table, no signal is more important to humans' interpreting interactions and predicting behavior than the smile. Dartmouth Professor of Psychological and Brain Sciences Paul Whalen explores how the brain processes facial expressions and how that helps us understand our emotional lives. Underwriter: Chroma Technology Corp.

**DECEMBER 2 • Glenn Andres**
The Buildings of Vermont

Middlebury College professor Glenn Andres examines the remarkable range, quality, humanity, and persistence of Vermont's built landscape. Underwriter: Crosby-Gannett Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation

**JANUARY 6 • Carol Berry**
Vincent Van Gogh:
What Influenced Him and His Influence on Art

Art historian Carol Berry considers the experiences, painters, and authors that influenced Van Gogh's work and his influence on twentieth-century artists. Underwriter: Merchants Bank

**FEBRUARY 3 • Allen Koop**
The History of Health Care in the US

Dartmouth professor Allen Koop describes how America's troubled, promising, and unique health care system has been shaped not only by developments in medicine but also by social forces, economics, politics, and historical surprises. Underwriter: Union Institute & University, MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

**MARCH 2 • Nancy Jay Crumbine**
Celebrating E. B. White

From Charlotte's Web to his exquisite essays in The New Yorker, E. B. White remains the master's master of elegant prose, sophisticated wit, and graceful irreverence. Drawing on his stories, essays, poems, and letters, Dartmouth professor Nancy Jay Crumbine celebrates White's versatility and enormous legacy. Underwriter: Merchants Bank

**APRIL 6 • Major Jackson**
An Evening with Poet Major Jackson

UVM professor Major Jackson reads from his new book, Roll Deep, and discusses how poetry not only serves as a record of our existence but also enlarges us as human beings. Underwriter: Carole and Geof Gaddis

**MAY 4 • Polly Young-Eisendrath**
What the Buddhists Teach: Finding Clarity in Everyday Life

How do we develop mindfulness and a compassionate optimism about a highly imperfect world? Author Dr. Polly Young-Eisendrath discusses the Buddhist model for remaining fully engaged in the ups and downs of everyday life.
Essex Junction
1st Wednesdays

**OCTOBER 7**  •  Jule Emerson
**The Costumes of Downton Abbey**
Middlebury College artist-in-residence Jule Emerson discusses the fashions worn in the popular PBS series. Underwriter: Tapia & Huckabay, P.C.

**NOVEMBER 4**  •  John Hockenberry
**Climate of Doubt**
In 2008, the presidential candidates agreed that climate change demanded urgent attention. But that national call to action has virtually disappeared. *Frontline* correspondent and host of NPR’s *The Takeaway* John Hockenberry describes what altered the climate change debate. **Location:** McCarthy Arts Center, Saint Michael’s College. Underwriter: Vermont Public Radio

**DECEMBER 2**  •  Ray Vega
**Roots of Latin Jazz**
Using recordings and videos, world renowned recording artist, composer, and educator Ray Vega examines the contributions of Latino American musicians who helped create Latin Jazz. **A Latino Americans: 500 Years of History program. Underwriter:** Husky Injection Molding Systems, Inc.

**JANUARY 6**  •  Helen Scott
**Shakespeare at the Cusp of Old and New**
Drawing on plays and historical scholarship, UVM professor Helen Scott describes Shakespeare’s life at the heart of a dynamic Renaissance theater scene that saw a charmed generation of writers producing hundreds of plays, the proliferation of theaters and London companies, and large, diverse audiences. Underwriter: Lisa Schamberg and Pat Robins

**FEBRUARY 3**  •  David Mills
**An Evening with Langston Hughes**
In this dramatic rendition of Langston Hughes’ poems and short stories, actor and writer David Mills celebrates the life of the Harlem Renaissance writer. Underwriter: Paul Frank + Collins

**MARCH 2**  •  Roy Harris
**The Pulitzer Gold Medal for Public Service**
In Pulitzer Prizes’ centennial year, author Roy Harris tells stories of the coveted prize awarded annually to a newspaper, and considers the profound contribution great journalism has made and still makes today. Underwriter: Pomerleau Real Estate

**APRIL 13** (Note date)  •  Elizabeth Morrison
**Merton, Meditation, and More: Buddhism in the West**
Buddhism is well-established in the US, among Buddhists and others, such as Catholic monk and author Thomas Merton, who engaged in Buddhism without conversion. Middlebury College religion professor Elizabeth Morrison considers what has emerged from the West’s encounter with Buddhism. Underwriter: Lisa Schamberg and Pat Robins

**MAY 4**  •  Christopher Ricks
**Just Like a Man? Bob Dylan and the Charge of Misogyny**
Eminent literary critic Christopher Ricks, author of *Dylan’s Visions of Sin*, considers misogyny in human and social contexts and whether Dylan’s song “Just Like a Woman” deserves the accusation. **Location:** McCarthy Arts Center, Saint Michael’s College. Underwriter: Saint Michael’s College
Manchester

1st Wednesdays

OCTOBER 7  •  Stephen Wade
The Beautiful Music All Around Us
Grammy nominee, banjo player, and music historian Stephen Wade explores folksong traditions across the South, uncovering the people and stories behind early Library of Congress recordings. Underwriter: The Arcadia Fund

NOVEMBER 4  •  Nicola Courtright
Creating Paris
Amherst College Art professor Nicola Courtright discusses how 16th- and 17th-century French kings, seeking national political unity, created a new image of Paris, building magnificent residences, squares, gardens, and boulevards that endure today. Underwriter: Merchants Bank

DECEMBER 2  •  Ilan Stavans
Don Quixote of La Mancha: The Novel that Invented Modernity
Celebrated literary critic and author Ilan Stavans considers the impact of the masterful Don Quixote on the eve of the 400th anniversary year of Cervantes’s death. Underwriter: Northshire Bookstore

JANUARY 6  •  Thomas Denenberg
The Wyeths: First Family of American Art
Shelburne Museum director Thomas Denenberg discusses the Wyeths—N. C. (1882–1945), Andrew (1917–2009), and Jamie (b. 1946)—and offers new perspectives on these three painters who have shaped the way Americans view their world. Underwriter: Southern Vermont Arts Center

FEBRUARY 3  •  Amy E. Martin
W. B. Yeats’ “Easter 1916” a Century Later
Mount Holyoke professor Amy E. Martin considers the iconic poem, the Irish Republicans’ insurrection, and the complexities of its commemoration a century later. Underwriter: Burr & Burton Academy

MARCH 2  •  David Sanger
The Future of Investigative Reporting
In the centenary year of the Pulitzer Prize, David Sanger, chief Washington correspondent for The New York Times and member of two Pulitzer-winning investigative teams, looks at what investigative reporting takes and what it will take in the future. Underwriter: Keelan Family Foundation

APRIL 6  •  Martin Weinstein
The People’s Pope
Pope Francis’s emphasis on the poor and marginalized has energized social justice in the Catholic Church. Author Martin Weinstein, professor emeritus at William Paterson University, examines the foundations of the Pope’s philosophy, the history of the church in Latin America, and the rise of liberation theology. Underwriter: Keelan Family Foundation

MAY 4  •  Elizabeth Samet
Sentimental Journeys: Literature and Long Wars
West Point English professor Elizabeth Samet, author of Soldier’s Heart, considers how sentimentality about country and war holds important implications for policymakers, combatants, and the public.
Middlebury

1st Wednesday

OCTOBER 7 • Safa Zaki
How the Brain Categorizes the World
Williams College professor Dr. Safa Zaki describes how the human brain recognizes and categorizes objects, as well as a challenge to that theory from studies of patients with amnesia.

NOVEMBER 4 • Richard Blanco
Becoming American: An Inaugural Poet’s Journey
Richard Blanco read at President Obama’s second inauguration, the first Latino, immigrant, and gay writer to have such an honor. Blanco examines cultural identity and the essence of place and belonging.

DECEMBER 2 • Roberta Stewart
Reading Homer with Veterans: Narratives of Return and Rage
Dartmouth Classics professor Roberta Stewart describes her work with veterans and examines what the story of Odysseus’s long journey home from war has to say to veterans, and to all of us.

JANUARY 6 • Stanley R. Sloan
Defense of the West
Middlebury College visiting scholar Stanley R. Sloan examines the challenges posed to the West by Russia, Middle East turmoil, terrorism, and political tendencies in some European countries. Underwriter: Vermont Council on World Affairs

FEBRUARY 3 • James Shapiro
Shakespeare in America
Shakespeare has been a prism through which American issues—revolution, slavery, war, social justice—have been refracted. Drawing upon his recent anthology of writings, Columbia University professor James Shapiro explores how the history of Shakespeare in America is also the history of America itself. Location: Mahaney Center for the Arts Concert Hall, Middlebury College. Presented with Middlebury College.

MARCH 2 • Marlene Heck
Building Monticello
Jefferson never knew the Monticello of today—in perfect condition, impeccably furnished. Dartmouth College senior lecturer Marlene Heck explains the lifelong project Jefferson called his “essay in architecture.” Underwriter: The Residence at Otter Creek and The Residence at Shelburne Bay

APRIL 6 • Nancy Jay Crumbine
The Legacy of Rachel Carson
Silent Spring not only launched the environmental movement but also identified fundamental problems with our relationship to nature. Dartmouth professor Nancy Jay Crumbine explores Carson’s clarity, courage, and brilliance. Underwriter: Allison and Don Hooper for the Northeast Regional Center of the National Wildlife Federation

MAY 4 • Jay Parini
Robert Frost in the World
Middlebury professor and Frost biographer Jay Parini explores how Robert Frost became America’s favorite poet by writing accessible poems, creating a uniquely appealing persona, and pioneering the public reading of poems. Underwriter: A Friend of the Series
OCTOBER 8  (Note date)  •  Stephen Wade
The Beautiful Music All Around Us
Grammy nominee, banjo player, and music historian Stephen Wade explores folksong traditions across the South, uncovering the people and stories behind early Library of Congress recordings. Location: Unitarian Church of Montpelier. Underwriter: The Arcadia Fund

NOVEMBER 4  •  David Macaulay
Life in the Studio
David Macaulay, award-winning author and illustrator of Castle, Cathedral, and The Way We Work, discusses current projects and challenges. Location: Unitarian Church of Montpelier. Underwriter: Bear Pond Books

DECEMBER 2  •  Darra Goldstein
Russia, the Land, and Its Food
Russian literature is filled with accounts of elaborate feasts, but what about the real foods of the people? Against a backdrop of history and culture, founding editor of Gastronomica Darra Goldstein explores how Russian cuisine expresses the riches and limitations of the North. Underwriter: Russian Life magazine

JANUARY 6  •  Gloria Estela González Zenteno
Today’s Latino Writers: Making Great American Literature

FEBRUARY 3  •  Jim Cooke
John Quincy Adams: A Spirit Unconquerable!
Actor Jim Cooke portrays our sixth president and arguably greatest Secretary of State, including his battle against Congress’s “Gag Rule” and his Supreme Court argument on behalf of Africans from the Amistad. Location: Farmers Night Series, House Chamber, Vermont State House, 7:30 pm. Underwriter: Cabot Creamery

MARCH 2  •  Jane Beck
Daisy Turner’s Kin: An African American Family Saga
Vermont Folklife Center founder Jane Beck considers the family narrative of Daisy Turner (1883–1988), from enslavement in Africa to a farmstead in Grafton. Underwriter: The Preservation Trust of Vermont

APRIL 6  •  Hedrick Smith
Who Stole the American Dream?
Hedrick Smith, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, author, and Frontline writer, chronicles four decades of changes in Washington policy-making and mindset, and their effect on the middle class. Location: Unitarian Church of Montpelier. Underwriter: Pomerleau Real Estate

MAY 4  •  Reeve Lindbergh
Lindbergh and the Spirit of St. Louis
Writer Reeve Lindbergh tells how the Spirit of St. Louis, the plane in which 25-year-old Charles Lindbergh made his non-stop New York-to-Paris flight, was also the vehicle that brought together her father and mother, and established a family.
Newport

1st Wednesdays

OCTOBER 7 • George Jaeger
America’s Challenges in a New World Order
With increasing risk of conflict with China, deepening differences with Russia, weakness in Europe, and endless Mideast turmoil, America is no longer the unchallenged superpower of the post-Cold War years. Distinguished veteran diplomat George Jaeger considers our need to rethink our world role and national priorities. Underwriter: Stanstead College

NOVEMBER 4 • Huck Gutman
Walt Whitman and the Civil War
Whitman’s Civil War writings give us a dual portrait, first of the war as “a strange, unloosen’d wondrous time,” and second of the emergence of a new Whitman. UVM Professor Huck Gutman examines some of the most remarkable poems about war ever published, and looks at Whitman’s development into the man Whitman had always wanted to be.

DECEMBER 2 • Sy Montgomery
Walking with the Great Apes
Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Birute Galdikas changed the way people understand animals’ lives. Author Sy Montgomery presents images from her travels to Gombe, Rwanda, and Borneo while researching her triple biography of these intrepid women.

JANUARY 6 • Katherine Paterson
Reading for the Life of the World
Vermonters Katherine Paterson, award-winning author of Bridge to Terabithia and The Great Gilly Hopkins, considers the importance and many benefits of reading.

FEBRUARY 10 (Note date) •
David Shribman and Cynthia Skrzycki
Confused by the News?
Veteran journalists Cynthia Skrzycki and Pulitzer Prize winner David Shribman examine the contemporary news scene with an eye to helping people discern truth from untruth, professional from amateur, and the enduring from the ephemeral.

MARCH 2 • John Miller
Photographing Any Place: Real or Ideal?
Photographer John Miller, author of Deer Camp and Granite and Cedar, discusses current projects and his ongoing challenges with documentary work. Underwriter: Passumpscic Savings Bank Member FDIC

APRIL 6 • Mark A. Stoler
Myths of World War II
Americans have maintained strong beliefs regarding WWII’s causes, consequences, and historical lessons—lessons cited to justify postwar US policies. UVM History Professor Emeritus Mark A. Stoler compares these perceptions of the war with what historians now maintain.

MAY 4 • Michael Arnowitt
Beethoven’s Sketchbooks
In this performance lecture, pianist Michael Arnowitt considers Beethoven’s creative process by exploring Beethoven’s sketchbooks.
Norwich
1st Wednesdays

OCTOBER 7 • Jane Carroll
Virtue and Vice: The World of Vermeer’s Women
Dartmouth professor Jane Carroll examines the stories of courtship, seduction, and virtue portrayed and encoded in the works of the seventeenth-century Dutch painter.

NOVEMBER 4 • Evan Thomas
Being Nixon: A Man Divided
Evan Thomas, former Editor at Large of Newsweek and bestselling author of Ike’s Bluff and Sea of Thunder, disposes of Richard Nixon’s cartoonish “Tricky Dick” persona and creates a three-dimensional portrait of a complex man filled with both light and darkness.

DECEMBER 2 • Joseph Ellis
The Quartet: Orchestrating the Second American Revolution, 1783–1789
Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Joseph Ellis tells the unexpected story of why the thirteen colonies, having just fought off a distant centralized governing power, would decide to accept the creation of a federal government with power over them as autonomous states. Underwriter: The Norwich Bookstore

JANUARY 6 • Peter Saccio
Cymbeline, the First Folio, and the Rest of Shakespeare
Dartmouth Professor Emeritus Peter Saccio unpacks the myriad riches of Shakespeare’s play Cymbeline—one of its uniquely complex plot, bizarre geography, unusual mixture of comedy, tragedy, and history, and extraordinary final scene of multiple discoveries.

FEBRUARY 3 • Emily Bernard
“In This Here Place”:
Race, Nation, and Toni Morrison’s Beloved
UVM professor Emily Bernard explores how Beloved argues that America must reckon with the consequences of our nation’s original sin—slavery. Underwriter: Stave Puzzles

MARCH 2 • Cecilia Gaposchkin
Gothic Magnificence
Dartmouth professor Cecilia Gaposchkin discusses the power of Gothic architecture in thirteenth-century Paris, including the cathedrals of Notre-Dame and Sainte-Chapelle. Underwriter: Smith & Vansant Architects PC

APRIL 6 • David McCullough Jr.
“You Are Not Special” . . . and Other Encouragements
Expanding on his popular commencement speech, viewed by millions on YouTube, high school English teacher and father of four David McCullough Jr. considers how we raise our kids today, and why passionate engagement—rather than success for its own sake—is critical to a fulfilling, happy life. Underwriter: Crossroads Academy

MAY 4 • Gus Speth
The Unlikely Making of an Environmental Leader
Gus Speth, founder of the Natural Resources Defense Council and World Resources Institute, White House advisor, head of the UN’s development efforts, and academic leader, reflects on his southern roots and very American story, and considers the need for a new environmentalism and how one can make a difference in an increasingly complex world.
Rutland Free Library
802.773.1860
7:00 PM

Rutland 1st Wednesdays

OCTOBER 7 • Willard Sterne Randall
On Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne’s Trail
Award-winning biographer Willard Sterne Randall looks at British general John Burgoyne’s failed campaigns in the Champlain Valley in 1776 and 1777, including his newly uncovered route to Saratoga—and defeat. Underwriter: The Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility

NOVEMBER 4 • Mark A. Stoler
Churchill and Roosevelt:
The Personal Element in Their Partnership
UVM History Professor Emeritus Mark A. Stoler examines the important personal relationship between Britain’s Prime Minister and America’s President during their World War II alliance. Underwriter: Merchants Bank

DECEMBER 2 • Kirsten Hoving
The Impressionists: Painters of Modern Life
Middlebury professor Kirsten Hoving examines how Impressionists focused in their paintings of contemporary life on cutting-edge modern subjects, imbuing them with controversial, even shocking, meanings.

JANUARY 6 • Nancy Nahra
Amelia
The mysterious disappearance of Amelia Earhart in 1937 often overshadows her accomplishments as a pilot and author. Champlain College professor Nancy Nahra examines the remarkable life of the aviation legend. Underwriter: Merchants Bank

FEBRUARY 3 • Tony Magistrale
The Shawshank Experience
UVM professor Tony Magistrale discusses how literature is adapted to film and explores how The Shawshank Redemption (1994), adapted from a Stephen King novella, became, according to IMDb rankings, the most popular motion picture ever.

MARCH 2 • George Jaeger
America’s Challenges in a New World Order
With increasing risk of conflict with China, deepening differences with Russia, weakness in Europe, and endless Mideast turmoil, America is no longer the unchallenged superpower of the post-Cold War years. Distinguished veteran diplomat George Jaeger considers our need to rethink our world role and national priorities.

APRIL 6 • Michael Arnowitt
An Evening of George Gershwin
In this performance lecture, pianist Michael Arnowitt explores the music and era of George Gershwin and performs An American in Paris and Rhapsody in Blue, among other memorable compositions. Location: Trinity Episcopal Church of Rutland. Underwriter: Bellerose family, in memory of Joe and Julie Teta

MAY 4 • Heather Cox Richardson
Joseph Pulitzer and the American Republic
Boston College professor Heather Cox Richardson explores Pulitzer’s remarkable life—his work in newspapers pushing clean government and middle-class values, his invention of a new kind of journalism, and his major role in creating the world we live in today. Underwriter: Merchants Bank
What If Poor Women Ran the World?

Labor historian Annelise Orleck tells the story of nine African-American union maids in Las Vegas who, during the 1970s, challenged welfare cuts and built a long-lasting, vibrant anti-poverty program run by poor mothers.

Georgia O’Keeffe: A Critical Look

Georgia O’Keeffe produced more than 2,000 works in her 75-year career. James Maroney, the former head of American Paintings at both Sotheby’s and Christie’s in New York who appraised her estate after her death, presents a critical evaluation of her best work. Underwriter: Passumpsic Savings Bank Member FDIC

The Literary Achievement of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

Dartmouth professor Peter Travis discusses the genius, comic wisdom, and enduring humanity of Geoffrey Chaucer, the fourteenth-century “Father of English Poetry.”

Art and Life in Renaissance Venice

Middlebury professor Katy Smith Abbott explores how fifteenth-century Venetians came to see themselves reflected in depictions of St. Mark, the Virgin Mary, Mars, Venus, and others, and what this reveals about Venice’s distinct place in the Renaissance.

Celebrating E. B. White

From Charlotte’s Web to his exquisite essays in The New Yorker, E. B. White remains the master’s master of elegant prose, sophisticated wit, and graceful irreverence. Drawing on his stories, essays, poems, and letters, Dartmouth professor Nancy Jay Crumbine celebrates White’s versatility and enormous legacy.

The Endurance: Shackleton’s Legendary Antarctic Expedition

In 1914, polar explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton left England for the Antarctic with a crew of 27 on his ship Endurance. When it was crushed by sea ice, they became castaways in the harshest environment on Earth. A century later, author Caroline Alexander shares a thrilling saga of stoic courage that also serves as a master class in leadership. Underwriter: Gil Steil Associates

Understanding Islamic Extremism

Former CIA Chief of Counterterrorism Haviland Smith examines the roots of Islamic fundamentalism, its spread since 9/11, how it affects us, whom it targets, and how the US might respond. Underwriter: Vermont Council on World Affairs

The Memoir Boom: Who, What, Why

Dartmouth professor and experimental memoirist Irene Kacandes discusses current approaches to life writing and considers why we continue to love reading about others’ lives. Underwriter: Bill and Sharon Biddle
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