2020-2021
1st Wednesdays
Free Public Talks at Libraries around Vermont

Includes ONLINE EVENTS
Welcome!

During these difficult times, we hope the humanities are bringing you joy, challenging you to think differently, and helping you to connect with others. In that spirit, we are pleased to present our 2020-2021 First Wednesdays season. 2020 has been tumultuous so far, and we fully expect some additional ups and downs as we move forward. A fair number of talks in the series will explore the moment we are now experiencing.

For everyone’s safety, the First Wednesdays talks in October, November, and December will be presented online rather than at your local library. While we’ve included in this brochure information about how to view those talks, please pay attention to our website and social media channels, as well as those of your local library, for the latest details.

You will be able to watch recordings of most of the talks presented during the season at vermonthumanities.org/first-wednesdays.

Our library hosts hope to be able to welcome us for safe, in-person gatherings starting in January 2021. Do keep an eye on our digital channels and theirs to confirm that we’ll be back together this winter. And for those who would rather enjoy digital presentations, we’ll continue to offer online programming for the foreseeable future.

However the season unfolds, we hope that you will join us—from wherever you’re most comfortable—for a season of exploration, learning, and connection. From Muhammad Ali to Charlotte Brontë, from the Middle Ages to the imagined American West, from Pulitzer Prize winners to US Ambassadors, we are proud to welcome you to the new First Wednesdays season of free humanities lectures.

Sincerely,

Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup
Executive Director
**DIGITAL EVENTS**

**OCTOBER 7**  
John Killacky and Dona Ann McAdams  
**Culture Wars**  
In the 1990s, artists such as David Wojnarowicz, Karen Finley, and Ron Athey served as lightning rods for outrage over the appropriateness of their receiving support from the National Endowment for the Arts. Photographer Dona Ann McAdams and curator John Killacky discuss the culture wars of this era and McAdams’ exhibition at the Helen Day Art Center, “Dona Ann McAdams: Performative Acts.”  
*Underwriter: The Samara Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation*

**NOVEMBER 4**  
Matthew Evan Taylor  
**Say Their Names, A Personal Story of Artistic Activism**  
In May 2020, Dr. Matthew Evan Taylor began a musical composition in response to the escalating uprising in the wake of the murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Ahmaud Arbery. Including selections from his recorded work, Dr. Taylor will discuss his journey towards using music as an avenue for advocacy and activism.  
*Partners: Middlebury College and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation*

**DECEMBER 2**  
Laurie Essig  
**Chasing the Happily Neverafter**  
Americans love (and hate) romance. And when things get rough — a global pandemic, the threat of nuclear war, and global climate collapse — we turn to Disney and the Hallmark Channel. Middlebury professor Laurie Essig reviews the ideology that sells us hope for a better future if we only find “the one.”  
*Partners: Middlebury College and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation*

**JANUARY 6**  
Thomas Denenberg  
**Winslow Homer and the Poetics of Place**  
The painter Winslow Homer (1836-1910) occupies an unusual and pivotal place in the history of American art. Thomas Denenberg, director of the Shelburne Museum, sketches Homer’s long and productive career, focusing on how he bridged the sentimental culture of the nineteenth century with the visual culture of the modern era.

**FEBRUARY 3**  
Karen Lounsbury  
**Cannabis: Medical Uses and Public Safety**  
UVM Pharmacology professor Dr. Karen Lounsbury reviews the history of cannabis and the medicinal products derived from it, as well as the benefits, risks, and therapeutic potential of medical cannabis. She’ll include time for questions and open discussion after this interactive session.

**MARCH 3**  
Jessamyn West  
**Libraries in the Time of Covid**  
Libraries have a central role in their communities, often being the only place to access free internet and other technology necessary for life in 2021. In the wake of the pandemic, libraries have had to both evaluate and rapidly respond to the changing world. Librarian Jessamyn West helps us to understand the role of the library in these unusual times.

**APRIL 7**  
Melody Walker Brook  
**For the Love of N’dakinna: Abenaki Continuity and Adaptation**  
Abenaki people have thrived within N’dakinna, their homeland, for more than 10,000 years. While the people and their culture have changed during this time, the core values of their ancestors have remained constant. Melody Walker Brook, citizen of the Elnu Abenaki Band of N’dakinna and former chair of the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs, describes how these core values can help shape a more beautiful future.

**MAY 5**  
Jason Mittell  
**Television Cop Shows, Police Brutality, and Black Lives Matter**  
How do television cop shows shape our understanding of police, race, and crime in America? Focusing on the television series The Wire, Middlebury professor Jason Mittell challenges our understanding of this television genre in the era of the Black Lives Matter movement.

*Partners: Middlebury College and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation*
Learn more about how to view Brattleboro’s digital-only events at vermonthumanities.org/brattleboro.

OCTOBER 7  Catherine Sanderson
**Merely Bystanders: The Psychology of Courage and Inaction**
Amherst College psychology professor Catherine Sanderson examines the factors that lead most of us to stay silent in the face of bad behavior, and how this tendency to stay silent allows such acts to continue. Sanderson will provide practical strategies that we can all use to speak up and take action.

Underwriter: The Vermont Country Store
Partner: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Pulitzer Prizes

NOVEMBER 4  Jarvis Green
Atlantic Is a Sea of Bones
Jarvis Green, founder of the Black theatre company JAG Productions, invites us to reflect individually and collectively on the afterlives and the legacies of the transatlantic slave trade. He’ll explore how Black theatre artists—and Black queer and feminist artists more broadly—have created ways to honor this history and heal ancestral trauma.

Underwriter: The Samara Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation

DECEMBER 2  Damian Costello
The Legacy of Nicholas Black Elk
Historian Damian Costello explores the life of the man behind the famous book Black Elk Speaks. Nicholas Black Elk’s Lakota philosophy can help us see the natural world as a unified whole, and his continued hope amidst great tragedy can inform how we approach contemporary crises.

Underwriter: Peter Gilbert Endowment Fund

JANUARY 6  Josiah Rule Randazzo
Meeting Men through Imagination
In the post-#MeToo era, men need new interventions to help express their masculinity without causing harm. Josiah Rule Randazzo, creator of The Complete Dick podcast, will explore how we can use everyday experiences to ask better questions and transform our understanding of masculinity and manhood. Please note: this talk will include adult language.

FEBRUARY 3  Jen Manion
Female Husbands and Their Wives
Some people, designated female at birth, transcended gender and lived as men in the 18th and 19th centuries, despite tremendous risk of violence. Amherst College History professor Jen Manion provides examples of such people and the women they married. Press reports about these relationships exposed dynamic, contested, and varied stories of love, courage, and loss.

Underwriter: The Samara Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation

MARCH 3  Ilan Stavans
How Yiddish Changed America and How America Changed Yiddish
Yiddish is imprinted in American English in terms like chutzpah, kosher, bagel, and schmooze. And the work of Sholem Aleichem, Anzia Yezierska, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Grace Paley, and Irving Howe shows the deep impact of Jewish immigration on the United States. Amherst College professor Ilan Stavans surveys the journey.

APRIL 7  Josie Leavitt
Eating While Fat
Comic Josie Leavitt shares her hilarious attempts at exercising and dieting, addresses fat shaming, and describes her struggle for body acceptance in a society that could do more to welcome different bodies.

Underwriter: The Samara Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation

MAY 5  Celia Gapsochkin
This is Not That: A Brief Introduction to the Black Death
The Black Death hit the Eurasian world in the fourteenth century and left long-term consequences. Dartmouth History professor Celia Gapsochkin presents an overview of the outbreak of the bubonic plague, and briefly compares it to the current Covid-19 pandemic.
Learn more about how to view Essex Junction’s digital-only events at vermonthumanities.org/essexjunction.

OCTOBER 7  Christal Brown  
The Opulence of Integrity: Dance and Muhammad Ali  
Christal Brown’s original dance piece “The Opulence of Integrity” was inspired by the public life and inner searching of Muhammad Ali, boxing’s outspoken superstar. Brown, associate professor of Dance at Middlebury College, will discuss the making of her work and its relevance to our present moment. 
Partner: Middlebury College and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

NOVEMBER 4  Kelley Di Dio  
The Complicated Histories of Monuments  
As monuments come down across the US, some decry that history is being erased. But what (and whose) history do monuments contain? Using several American and European examples, UVM Art History professor Kelley Di Dio considers the history and what should be done with these monuments. 
Underwriter: University of Vermont Humanities Center

DECEMBER 2  Kathryn Morse  
After “Migrant Mother:” The Promise and Peril of the First Green New Deal  
Immortalized in Dorothea Lange’s photographs of migrant workers, the Farm Security Administration helped rural Americans improve their lives through small loans and improved farm practices during the Great Depression. Middlebury professor Kathryn Morse explores the program’s successes and failures. 
Underwriter: Husky Injection Molding Systems, Inc. 
Partner: Middlebury College and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

JANUARY 6  Kathy Fox  
Why College in Prison? Why Liberal Arts?  
When the University of Vermont started offering liberal arts courses in prison for credit, some thought the program should instead teach trades or vocational skills. Kathy Fox, founder and director of the UVM Liberal Arts in Prison Program, explains how everyone can be transformed by exposure to a liberal arts curriculum. 
Underwriter: University of Vermont Humanities Center

FEBRUARY 3  David Mills  
The Postmodern Turn in Architecture  
The designs and skylines of our cities are constantly changing, molded by economic forces and by our ideas of who we are as humans. Champlain College professor David Mills explores how opposing theories of human nature have shaped and reshaped cities in the last century, from modern to postmodern and beyond. 
Underwriter: Lisa Schambreg and Pat Robins

MARCH 3  Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst  
Religious Literacy is Social Justice  
UVM professor Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst describes religious literacy—knowing what religion is, how religions work, and who religious people might be—as a social justice issue. Fuerst explores who is allowed to be religiously illiterate, who has to be religiously literate, and how to learn more about religion. 
Underwriter: The Vermont Country Store 
Partner: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Pulitzer Prizes

APRIL 7  Eva Garcelon-Hart  
A Same-Sex Couple in Early Vermont: The Story of Charity and Sylvia  
Charity Bryant and Sylvia Drake were accepted in their early 19th-century rural Vermont community as a married couple. Drawing from the archival collections at the Sheldon Museum in Middlebury, Eva Garcelon-Hart shares the women’s correspondence, love poems, and their unique double silhouette that is considered the first image of a same-sex couple in America. 
Underwriter: The Samara Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation

MAY 5  Will Alexander  
The Need to Read Unrealisms  
Fantasy, science fiction, and other “unrealisms” are vital to our survival—especially when such stories are also silly, escapist, and strange. Will Alexander—National Book Award winner and author of unrealist fiction for young audiences—describes the whimsical importance and imaginative necessity of narrative weirdness. 
Underwriter: Husky Injection Molding Systems, Inc.
Learn more about how to view Manchester’s digital-only events at vermonthumanities.org/manchester.

OCTOBER 7 Dana Walrath
**Busting Out of the Ivory Tower: From Anthropology to Writing and Art**
Dementia. Genocide. Mental illness. The atomic bomb. These may be rich subjects for academics, but most of us turn away from such topics. Yet writer, artist, and anthropologist Dana Walrath focuses on these themes in her creative work, finding hope, insight, and even laughter in the most unexpected places.

NOVEMBER 4 Andre Fleche
**The American Civil War and the Shaping of the Western Hemisphere**
The Union victory in the Civil War affected the future of the Western Hemisphere in profound ways. Castleton History professor Andre Fleche describes how the war influenced the demise of slavery in the Americas, the retreat of European empires from the New World, and the emergence of the United States as an imperialist power.

DECEMBER 2 Glynnis Fawkes
**Charlotte Brontë Before Jane Eyre: The Making of a Graphic Biography**
Cartoonist Glynnis Fawkes explains the research and design processes she followed to create her graphic biography, Charlotte Brontë Before Jane Eyre. Focusing on two segments of the biography, she illuminates moments in Brontë’s life that were key to her literary success.

JANUARY 6 Ilan Stavans
**How Yiddish Changed America and How America Changed Yiddish**
Yiddish is imprinted in American English in terms like chutzpah, kosher, bagel, and schmooze. And the work of Sholem Aleichem, Anzia Yezierska, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Grace Paley, and Irving Howe shows the deep impact of Jewish immigration on the United States. Amherst College professor Ilan Stavans surveys the journey.

FEBRUARY 3 Susan Clark
**Slow Democracy and the Power of Community**
Author and community educator Susan Clark explains the Slow Democracy movement, in which ordinary people mobilize to find local solutions to local problems. In the process some find they can bridge the “us versus them” divide so prevalent in our national politics.

MARCH 3 Jane Chaplin
**Roman Women**
Some might expect that the lives of women in the Roman world revolved entirely around the family and domesticity. But Roman women owned property, ran businesses, and represented themselves in court. Middlebury Classics professor Jan Chaplin discusses the place of women in the Roman world, the values attached to them, and how she learned about their lives.

APRIL 7 Richard Wright
**US Immigration Policy in Historical Perspective**
It may seem that the current anxieties about immigration in the US have never been more intense, but history suggests otherwise. Dartmouth professor Richard Wright examines the present-day contradictions of US immigration policy and places them in historical perspective.

MAY 5 Jen Purcell
**Domestic Soldiers: British Housewives and the Second World War**
How did British housewives experience the Second World War and contribute to the war effort? Saint Michael’s History professor Jen Purcell tells the stories of seven housewives from across Britain. They grappled with the challenges of wartime, navigating shifting relationships at home and in their communities, and struggled to be recognized for their efforts.
**EVENTS being held ONLINE**

Learn more about how to view Middlebury’s digital-only events at vermonthumanities.org/middlebury.

**OCTOBER 7** Russell Muirhead

**Conspiracy Talk and American Democracy Today**

Conspiracy theory, once on the fringes of American democracy, is now at its center. And often conspiracies are presented without any theory. Dartmouth professor Russell Muirhead examines the nature of current conspiracy talk, and what it is doing to our democracy.

*Partner: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Pulitzer Prizes*

**NOVEMBER 4** Susan Ouellette

**Emma Willard: Early Female Education and the Campaign for Women’s Suffrage**

Emma Willard founded the first school for women’s higher education in the US. Saint Michael’s History professor Susan Ouellette describes how the educational opportunities provided by Willard’s schools laid the groundwork for the early suffrage movement.

*Underwriter: Nancy Linkroum Pennell EW’61*

**DECEMBER 2** Janice McCabe

**Friends with Academic Benefits: How College Friendship Networks Matter**

For her book Connecting in College, Dartmouth professor Janice McCabe examined 82 students’ friendships over five years and identified three types of friendship networks: tight-knitters, compartmentalizers, and samplers. Challenging views of friendships as either helping or harming, McCabe will show how and for whom friends help and hinder.

**JANUARY 6** Timothy Billings

**How to Read Chinese Poetry (If You Can’t Read Chinese): The Case of Ezra Pound**

In 1915, Ezra Pound published a collection of early “translations” of Chinese poetry that took the poetic world by storm. However, Pound didn’t know a word of Chinese. Middlebury professor Timothy Billings deciphered the manuscripts that Pound used as “cheat sheets” to compose adaptations of Tang Dynasty poetry.

*Partner: Middlebury College and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation*

**FEBRUARY 3** Anthony Grudin

**Andy Warhol’s Animal Advocacy**

Andy Warhol famously demonstrated that art could be as mundane and mechanical as a can of soup or a bottle of soda. But contrary to his reputation as a mechanical figure, Andy Warhol was a biocentric artist with a deep interest in non-human life. Author Anthony Grudin examines this contradiction, which has been overlooked by most of the artist’s commentators.

*Underwriter: Tapia & Huckabay, P.C.*

**MARCH 3** Richard Wright

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*Partner: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Pulitzer Prizes*

**APRIL 7** Jack and Jamie McCallum

**On Athletes and Activists**

Sports have a clear relationship to American culture. Social science gravitates toward an analysis of cultural issues like race, class, gender, and politics. Jack and Jamie McCallum address both perspectives in an unusual collaboration. Jack is a sportswriter while his son Jamie is a professor of Sociology at Middlebury College.

*Underwriter: A Friend of the Series*

*Partners: Middlebury College and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Pulitzer Prizes*

**MAY 5** Governor Madeleine Kunin

**From Politics to Poetry**

As the first female governor for the State of Vermont, the ambassador to Switzerland for President Clinton, and the holder of other prestigious positions, Madeleine Kunin has inspired women and girls to discover their own voices as leaders. Governor Kunin will speak about her life in politics and read from her newest book of poetry, Red Kite, Blue Sky.

*Partners: Middlebury College and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Pulitzer Prizes*
**EvENts being held ONLINE**

Learn more about how to view Montpelier’s digital-only events at vermonthumanities.org/montpelier.

**OCTOBER 7**  Reuben Jackson  
* I Wonder as I Wander: Duke Ellington’s Nature-Inspired Works  
Reuben Jackson, former host of VPR’s Friday Night Jazz, explores Duke Ellington compositions that spotlight the jazz legend’s growth as an arranger and composer. Jackson will play and discuss arresting yet accessible movements from extended works like *The Far East Suite*.  
Underwriter: Bear Pond Books

**NOVEMBER 4**  Teresa Mares  
* Life on the Other Border: Farmworkers and Food Justice in Vermont  
Those who put food on our tables disproportionately experience food insecurity in their own homes. For more than seven years, UVM Anthropology professor Teresa Mares has studied food access among the Latinx farmworker community in Vermont. Her ethnographic research illuminates the many ways workers sustain themselves and their families while also serving as the backbone of the state’s agricultural economy.  
Underwriter: University of Vermont Humanities Center

**DECEMBER 2**  Stan Sloan  
* The United States and the World in 2021  
Whether under a second Trump administration or a new Democratic-led administration, the United States will face multiple national security issues in 2021. Stan Sloan considers our country’s relationship with allies and adversaries, as well as the impact of the Covid-19 crisis.  
Partners: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Pulitzer Prizes

**JANUARY 6**  Erin Sassin  
* Reinventing the Family Home  
Middlebury College professor Erin Sassin examines how American reformers and homeowners have, in pursuit of “the simple life,” attempted to reinvent the form and idea of the single-family home, from communal experiments to the current tiny house phenomenon.  
Underwriter: Margot George Fund  
Partner: Middlebury College and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

**FEBRUARY 3**  Joseph and Jesse Bruchac  
* We Are Still Here  
Location: Vermont State House Chamber, 7:30 pm  
Using drum, flute, rattle, and vocals, father and son storytellers and musicians Joseph and Jesse Bruchac of the Nulhegan Abenaki Nation will address the continued presence and vibrant cultural heritage of the Wabanaki Nations of N’dakinna, with special emphasis on the years of the Vermont Eugenics project and the long struggle for government recognition.  
Underwriter: Cabot Creamery Cooperative

**MARCH 3**  Nathaniel Lewis  
* In Wildness: Imagining the American West  
Thoreau wrote that “the West of which I speak is but another name for the Wild,” and indeed for much of its history the American West has been associated with the idea of wildness. Saint Michael’s College professor Nathaniel Lewis explores our understanding of both nation and nature in the imagined West.

**APRIL 7**  Adrie Kusserow  
* Poetry During Covid-19  
Inspired by the Mary Oliver poem, “Wild Geese,” Saint Michael’s College professor Adrie Kusserow wrote “Mary Oliver for Corona Times,” stating, *You do not have to use this isolation to make your marriage better/your body slimmer, your children more creative.* She’ll discuss Oliver’s poem and explore ways in which the pandemic has sparked creative work.  
Underwriter: Pomerleau Real Estate

**MAY 5**  Marilyn Blackwell  
* Why Not in Vermont? The Long Campaign for Women’s Suffrage  
Why did Vermont lawmakers resist women voting in the 19th and 20th centuries? Through the stories of three Vermont suffragists, Lyn Blackwell will outline the shifting debate over women’s full citizenship from the 1850s until 1920.  
Underwriter: Leonine Public Affairs, LLP
Learn more about how to view Newport’s digital-only events at vermonthumanities.org/newport.

OCTOBER 7  •  Nancy 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.
Undertwriter: Peter Gilbert Endowment Fund

NOVEMBER 4  •  Molly Zapp
Express Your Mind – Without Losing It
Curiosity, empathy, and other tools can transform even passionate disagreements into chances to authentically share opinions. Journalist and cultural critic Molly Zapp offers practical techniques to avoid straining relationships while expressing yourself.
Partner: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Pulitzer Prizes

DECEMBER 2  •  David Mills
Dare to Dream
Actor David Mills portrays Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. surmounting his early uncertainties and transforming into a world-renowned civil rights icon. Be reawakened and elevated with highlights from Dr. King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” “I Have a Dream,” and “Promised Land.”
Undertwriter: Richard and Kathy White

JANUARY 6  •  Phillip Ackerman-Leist
The Ingredients of Informed Environmental Stewardship
Communities around the world have connected science, policy, community action, and the arts to work toward a pesticide-free future. Phillip Ackerman-Leist from Sterling College shares inspiring stories from these communities and highlights ways to preserve critical ecological and social resources.
Partner: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Pulitzer Prizes

FEBRUARY 3  •  David Shribman and Cindy Skrzycki
The News About the News
In today’s political and cultural atmosphere, it is vital that the public stays informed and the press does its job. Journalists Cindy Skrzycki and Pulitzer Prize winner David Shribman examine the current media landscape, distinguishing between fake and real news, amateur and professional, slanted and objective.
Partner: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Pulitzer Prizes

MARCH 3  •  Carol Berry
Vincent Van Gogh and His Language of Compassion
Despite his reputation for madness, Vincent Van Gogh was a compassionate and faith-filled man. Art historian Carol Berry explains how Van Gogh depicted the sacredness of life in ways that touched and comforted people around the world.
Undertwriter: Passumpsic Bank Member FDIC

APRIL 7  •  Darrin McMahon
Three Revolutions in the History of Happiness
Florida State University History professor Darrin McMahon considers three major transformations in humanity’s understanding of happiness. Covering the Paleolithic period to the present, McMahon ponders what the history of happiness might have to tell us about its future.

MAY 5  •  Yvonne Daley
The Counterculture’s Impact on Vermont and Vermont’s Influence on the Counterculture Generation
In the late 1960s and ’70s, thousands of young migrants, largely from the cities and suburbs of New York and Massachusetts, turned their backs on the establishment of the 1950s and moved to the back woods, small towns and cities of rural Vermont, transforming the state while being transformed themselves. Yvonne Daley, author of Going Up the Country: When the Hippies, Dreamers, Freaks and Radicals Moved to Vermont, reviews this movement.
EVENTS being held ONLINE

Learn more about how to view Norwich's digital-only events at vermonthumanities.org/norwich.

OCTOBER 7
Andrea Rosen
In January 2020, a coalition of Vermont curators launched “2020 Vision: Seeing the World Through Technology,” exploring how technology shapes the way we see our state and the world. Curator Andrea Rosen speaks to the prescience of the theme during the year when the Covid-19 pandemic shuttered Vermont galleries.
Underwriter: University of Vermont Humanities Center

NOVEMBER 4
Tarek El-Ariss
The Story of Water in Times of Crisis
What does water tell us about who we are, from the first civilizations in Mesopotamia to our modern environments? Dartmouth professor Tarek El-Ariss examines our relationship to water in times of crisis, linking war in the Middle East with regional water shortages and pandemics.

DECEMBER 2
David Mills
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Actor David Mills portrays Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. surmounting his early uncertainties and transforming into a world-renowned civil rights icon. Be reawakened and elevated with highlights from Dr. King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” “I Have a Dream,” and “Promised Land.”
Underwriter: The Norwich Bookstore

JANUARY 6
Susan Burch
Telling Disability Stories: Histories, Representations, and Imaginations
The meaning of “disability” shifts across times, places, and cultures. In spotlighting stories centered on disabled people, Middlebury professor Susan Burch draws on history, popular media representations, and inclusive design practices to reimagine our past, present, and possible future.
Partner: Middlebury College and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

FEBRUARY 3
Mark Breen
Ancient Eyes - Ageless Skies
Since the dawn of human civilization, people have gazed into the heavens, trying to find meaning and connection to their lives. Monuments like Stonehenge and the Great Pyramid attest to the significance of the stars, which still offer important lessons for us today.

MARCH 3
Maura D’Amore
Various Useless and Pleasing Things: Crafty Children in the Nineteenth Century
Crafts for children as an activity were invented in the decades after the Civil War. Saint Michael’s English professor Maura D’Amore shares scenes of planning, cutting, pasting, and constructing from the 1860s and 1870s that show a new appreciation for guided childhood tinkering as worthy of adult attention and wonder.
Underwriter: Otto & Associates

APRIL 7
Luis Vivanco
When the Bicycle Came to Vermont
UVM Anthropology professor Luis Vivanco explores the fascinating early history of the bicycle in Vermont, an invention that generated widespread curiosity when it arrived in the 1880s—helping spark important changes in industrial production, consumerism, road policies, gender relations, and cultural ideas.
Underwriter: University of Vermont Humanities Center

MAY 5
James Sanchez and Joel Fendelman
In Loco Parentis
Documentary filmmakers James Sanchez and Joel Fendelman explore the history of rape, sexual assault, and cover-up at a prestigious New England boarding school, while unpacking the cultural and social dynamics that lead to administrators protecting their institutions over the safety of their students.
Underwriter: Otto & Associates
Partner: Middlebury College and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
EVENTS being held ONLINE

Learn more about how to view Rutland’s digital-only events at vermonthumanities.org/rutland.

OCTOBER 7  •  Bridget Butler
Night Moves: Discovering the Wonders of Bird Migration
Many of us are dazzled by autumn colors during the daytime. But we can be just as dazzled by the night moves of thousands of birds passing quietly overhead during their fall migration. Join "bird diva" Bridget Butler to discover this almost-silent world.

NOVEMBER 4  •  Susan Ouellette
Emma Willard: Early Female Education and the Campaign for Women’s Suffrage
Emma Willard founded the first school for women’s higher education in the United States. Saint Michael’s History professor Susan Ouellette describes how the educational opportunities provided by Willard’s schools laid the groundwork for the early suffrage movement, although Willard was not a suffragist herself.

DECEMBER 2  •  Nancy 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.

JANUARY 6  •  Derek Boothby
China’s Belt and Road Initiative
In making infrastructure developments and investments in nearly 70 countries, China is seeking to restructure the world economy and energetically expand its global influence. Derek Boothby, former director of the UN’s Department of Political Affairs, explores the breadth and depth of this massive global initiative, and considers what it might mean for America’s future.

FEBRUARY 3  •  Daniel Brayton
Shakespeare and the History of Fish
The works of Shakespeare are full of salty metaphors that reveal a profound familiarity with the ocean and its creatures. Middlebury professor Daniel Brayton discusses the role of the sea in Renaissance literary culture in general and in Shakespeare’s plays in particular.

MARCH 3  •  William Edelglass
A History of the Concept of Race
The first European to divide the people of the world into distinct races did so in the 17th century. This bizarre categorization developed into one of the most historically significant ideas of the modern world. Marlboro professor William Edelglass traces the intellectual history of the concept of race in the West from its prehistory to today.

APRIL 7  •  David Anderegg
Nerds and Geeks: A New Update on an Old Idea
American anti-intellectualism has a long and colorful history, but the triumph of Silicon Valley laid these prejudices to rest...or did it? The last ten years have seen a renewal of old anti-intellectual tropes in the form of anti-nerd and geek stereotypes. Professor of Psychology David Anderegg explores whether we really love nerds and geeks now.

MAY 5  •  Irene Kacandes
Compassion and Its Aftermaths
How does one develop compassion, and what should one do when feeling it? Dartmouth professor Irene Kacandes explores these questions and examines how we can take action even when our movements are severely limited, such as during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Partner: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Pulitzer Prizes
Learn more about how to view St. Johnsbury’s digital-only events at vermonthumanities.org/stjohnsbury.

**OCTOBER 7**  
Michael Poster  
*If She Has a Pulse, She Has a Chance*  
*If She Has a Pulse, She Has a Chance* is a series of deeply moving photographic portraits, stories, and essays about recovery from opioid addiction. Artist and activist Michael Poster describes his work on the series, completed over two years at the Turning Point Recovery Center in Brattleboro.

**NOVEMBER 4**  
Bryn Geffert  
*Democracies, Libraries, and Free Information*  
Democracy works only when citizens enjoy unfettered access to good information. But a broken system of publishing can impede this learning. UVM dean of libraries Bryn Geffert shares the innovative ways that some libraries get information into the hands of everyone who needs it.

**DECEMBER 2**  
Kemi Fuentes-George  
*Environment and Race: The Hidden Connections*  
How is race connected to environmental degradation? Middlebury professor Kemi Fuentes-George draws from national and global cases to describe how racism shapes—and is shaped—by environmental management in areas like conservation, waste management, and climate change, and highlights ways towards a more just environmentalism.

**JANUARY 6**  
Erica Heilman  
*Making Rumble Strip in My Closet*  
Erica Heilman’s award-winning podcast *Rumble Strip* covers a range of Vermont-related topics, from mental health, hunger, and homelessness to deer hunting, cheerleading, and donut shops. In this talk, Heilman discusses the interview process and shares stories from her podcast, which she describes as “extraordinary conversations with ordinary people. Or that’s the goal.”

**FEBRUARY 3**  
Mary Coffey  
*Orozco’s American Epic*  
The Epic of American Civilization is a 24-panel mural painted by José Clemente Orozco at Dartmouth College between 1932 and 1934. Mary Coffey, Dartmouth professor and the author of *Orozco’s American Epic: Myth, History, and the Melancholy of Race*, explores one of the Mexican muralist’s greatest works.

**MARCH 3**  
Greg Bottoms  
*Lowest White Boy: On the Hidden Forces of American Racism*  
Lyndon Johnson once observed, “If you can convince the lowest white man he’s better than the best colored man, he won’t notice you’re picking his pocket.” UVM English professor Greg Bottoms discusses his memoir, *Lowest White Boy*, which explores the powerful historical, cultural, social, and political forces behind white supremacy.

**APRIL 7**  
Elizabeth Morrison  
*How China Became Buddhist and Buddhism Became Chinese*  
Chinese society never became exclusively Buddhist, but other religious traditions had to respond as Buddhist ideas, practices, and institutions permeated the country. Middlebury Religion professor Elizabeth Morrison discusses how the Buddhist tradition came to China, how it was received, and the distinctive Chinese forms of Buddhism that emerged.

**MAY 5**  
Rich Wolfson  
*Einstein in a Nutshell*  
Einstein’s most famous contribution to science—his theory of relativity—is based on an idea so simple it can be stated in one sentence. Yet from that simple idea, explains Middlebury professor Richard Wolfson, follow conclusions that have revolutionized our notions of space, time, and causality.
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