Two continents. Two epic heroes. Two classical scholars. Professor Usher will discuss how the work of maverick Classicists Milman Parry (1902-1934) and George Thomson (1903-1987) revolutionized the field of Classics in their day and how their scholarly discoveries and vision brought him recently to Africa and Mongolia in pursuit of the study of two landmark texts of the classical canon—Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* and Homer’s *Odyssey*. In particular Professor Usher will speak about his research on Pier Paolo Pasolini’s 1970 film “Notes for an African *Oresteia*” in Zomba, Malawi, where he was inadvertently caught up in a sub-Saharan version of the Arab Spring. He will also discuss the rich living heritage of Mongolian oral epic and its relationship to Homeric poetry, and relate a unique experience he had in Ulaanbaatar with a modern performer of that ancient tradition.

Professor Usher is Chair of the Classics Department and teaches courses in Greek and Latin language and literature. He also teaches for the Integrated Humanities Program and the Honors College. In addition to scholarly books and articles in the field of Classics, he has published three acclaimed books for children and an opera libretto in Latin. Professor Usher lives in Shoreham, where he and his wife built and operate Works & Days Farm, a small, diversified farmstead that produces lamb, pork, honey, and eggs.