

## Literature

### Academic Program and Student Enrollment

During the past year, 960 undergraduates enrolled in literature subjects, 9 were registered as literature majors, 27 as minors, and 88 as concentrators in literature.

The Literature program was the top-ranked program at MIT in the number of HASS-Distribution (HASS-D) enrollments this year (599), as well as in the HASS component of the Communication Requirement (636). Literature offered 18 subjects for HASS-D credit, taught in 39 sections, and 22 CI-H subjects, taught in 43 sections. In addition, Literature offered one subject, 21L010J Writing about Literature, in the CI-HW category and 12 subjects, taught in 12 sections, in the CI-M category for literature majors.

### Teaching Awards

Three members of the Literature faculty were honored for their teaching and educational contributions this year:

- Associate professor Diana Henderson received the Everett Moore Baker Award for excellence in undergraduate teaching.
- Professor John Hildebidle received the Arthur C. Smith Award for meaningful contributions and devotion to undergraduate student life and learning at MIT.
- Professor Ruth Perry was selected as a Margaret MacVicar Faculty Fellow in recognition of more than 30 years of inspiring teaching, mentoring, and educational leadership in Women's Studies and Literature. Professor Perry founded the Women's Studies Program at MIT, was one of the founders of the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies, and has been a major contributor to MIT's advance to leadership on issues affecting women in university life. Most recently, Professor Perry has begun to include subjects in Anglo-American ballads in her course offerings, cotaught with George Ruckert (Music and Theater Arts).

### Research and Publication

This year saw the publication of two long-awaited books by members of the faculty:

- Professor Perry's *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Culture and Literature, 1748–1818*, published by Cambridge University Press, draws on more than a decade of research on the social history of England and on the evidence of hundreds of novels to propose a bold revision of our understanding of the relation between the emergence of the novel as a genre and the institution of marriage.
- Professor James Buzard's *Disorienting Fiction: The Autoethnographic Work of 19th-Century British Novels*, published by Princeton University Press and also the fruit of many years' research, deals with the ways in which the English novel anticipated aspects of anthropological method and theory—particularly

the classic formulation of the role of participant observation—and influenced subsequent ideas of cultural identity and national culture.

Each of these books calls for important revisions in our understanding of the English novel, and early reviews and comments suggest that they both will have major impact in literary studies.

Other research accomplishments include the following:

—Peter de Florez professor Henry Jenkins's *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Intersect* was accepted for publication by New York University Press. Professor Jenkins continues to contribute monthly columns to *Technology Review* and *Computer Games*, and he published five articles on popular culture, film, and media.

—Professor David Thorburn, whose scholarly interests include television and film study as well as the novel, has also begun to publish poetry. His poem "June 19, 1953" was accepted by *Threepenny Review*.

—Professor Hildebidle's *Signs, Translations*, a volume of poetry, is scheduled for publication in July 2005 by the Salmon Press, Ireland.

—Professor William Uricchio published five essays on television history and theory, early cinema, and historically themed computer games and completed five others, forthcoming in *The Oxford Film and Media Handbook*, *Screen Culture*, *The Silent Cinema Reader*, and other collections.

—Associate professor Mary Fuller completed the manuscript of "Seadogs, Turks' Heads, and Rebellious Fish: Fame and Memory in the Age of English Expansion."

—Professor Henderson completed *Shake-Shifters: The Art of Collaborating with Shakespeare across Time and Media*, forthcoming from Cornell University Press. *Shake-Shifters* examines the ways particular writers and performing artists have adapted and revised elements of Shakespeare's drama to serve their own purposes and investigates both the artistic process and the cultural ramifications of such transformations. Henderson's *Concise Companion to Shakespeare on Screen* is also forthcoming, from Oxford University Press.

—Senior lecturer Wyn Kelley's *Companion to Melville* is forthcoming from Blackwell's, and she is completing "Herman Melville: A Short Introduction," also for Blackwell's.

### **Administration**

Professor Peter S. Donaldson will end his long tenure (1990–2005) as head of Literature this year. He will be succeeded in the position by Professor Buzard. During the years of Professor Donaldson's leadership, Literature developed faculty strength in Renaissance literature and Shakespeare, adding three tenured faculty members in this area, and in film and media studies, with the promotion of Professor Jenkins to tenure and the recruitment of Professor Uricchio (jointly appointed in Foreign Languages and Literatures). MIT is now among the national leaders in these areas. Literature has also

advanced in educational technology and has launched the SM program in Comparative Media Studies (with Foreign Languages and Literatures and the program in Writing and Humanistic Studies). This program, which is now largely independent under the leadership of Professors Uricchio and Jenkins but continues to be administered by Literature, has forged connections with industry, has its own new undergraduate major, and has made important contributions to the growth of the field and to the intellectual life of the Institute. Literature has also advanced in areas of focal importance in literary studies, such as the literature of travel writing, literature and science, and, with the appointment of Sandy Alexandre as assistant professor (see Faculty Appointments), in African American Studies.

Administrative officer Janice Ellertsen received the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences Infinite Mile Award in the Unsung Hero category. This award was richly deserved, marking Jan's years of problem solving, careful planning, effective leadership, and personal skill in her position as Literature's administrative officer. Jan oversaw the growth of the Comparative Media Studies Program under Literature's administrative umbrella and largely created the structures and working arrangements that link these two programs. It is also gratifying that this recognition is now given to Jan, who was one of the founding members of the committee that launched MIT's extensive program of Rewards and Recognitions for staff and administrators.

The Literature Headquarters was reorganized this year with the appointment of Laurel Landers as administrative assistant. Laurel has had many years' experience at Harvard, including in the School of Public Health, the Arnold Arboretum, and the Business School. She has a BA in English literature from the University of Illinois.

We note with sadness the death of John (Chris) Pomiecko, who served for many years as coordinator of the Humanities Film Office and more recently as the program administrator of the Comparative Media Studies Program. Chris, who was an excellent administrator as well as a thoughtful advisor and nurturing presence for a generation of students, will be greatly missed.

### **Fellowships**

Professor Thorburn was William Evans visiting lecturer at the University of Otago, New Zealand. Professor Uricchio completed his year-long John Simon Guggenheim fellowship. Professor Fuller held fellowships at the Newberry Library, the Folger Library, and the Huntington Library. In addition, she was an MIT visiting member of Balliol College, Oxford.

### **Major Addresses and Presentations**

Professor Donaldson gave the keynote address "From Folio to DVD: Shakespeare in Popular Culture" at the 5th Shakespeare in Performance Conference at the Center for Renaissance and Baroque Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, and the keynote talk "To Be or Interbe: Hamlet among the Pixelvisionaries," a commentary on Michael Almercyda's film adaptation of Hamlet), at Wesleyan University's Center for Film Studies.

Professor Thorburn delivered “The Web of Paradox: Democracy and New Media” and “No Elegies for Gutenberg: New Media and the Work of Culture” as William Evans visiting lecturer at the University of Otago. He also gave the keynote address at the International Conference of the Taiwan Communications Commission, Kainan University, Taipei, Taiwan.

Professor Perry gave the plenary address “Murder and Incest in Eighteenth-Century Ballads” at the American Society for 18th-Century Studies’ annual conference.

Professor Jenkins gave the keynote address “Media Literacy: Who Needs It?” at the New Media Conference in Honolulu and the keynote address at the Intimate Technologies Conference at Northeastern University.

Professor Fuller gave the plenary address at “Mobilis in Mobile,” the International Conference on Studies in Travel Writing at the University of Hong Kong.

Professor Buzard delivered “Disorienting Fiction: The Autoethnographic Work of Nineteenth-Century British Novels” at Auburn University and “The Concept of Autoethnography in the Future of the Humanities” at the Second International Conference on the Humanities at Monash University Centre, Prato, Italy.

Professor Uricchio gave the plenary talk “The Rebirth of the Televisual” at the Hebrew University Smart Family Institute of Communications in Jerusalem and the keynote address “Branding European Media” at the Asian Media Conference at Nanyang University, Kuala Lumpur.

### **Funded Research and Educational Projects**

The Metamedia Project, codirected by Professors Jenkins and Donaldson and Dr. Kurt Fendt (Foreign Languages and Literatures) has been funded for next year by the D’Arbeloff Fund for Excellence in Education. This project is designed to help faculty new to multimedia pedagogy create teaching modules in subjects for which media collections are needed. Faculty participants include Professors Henderson, Donaldson, and Jenkins and senior lecturer Wyn Kelley (Literature), associate professor Tommy de Frantz (Music and Theater Arts), senior lecturer Gilberte Furstenberg, associate professor Emma Teng (Foreign Languages and Literatures), and others.

Professor Donaldson’s Cross-Media Annotation System (XMAS) was funded for an outreach phase by MIT’s iCampus. XMAS, which allows students to create video-rich multimedia essays and discussions and share them remotely, has been used on the MIT campus for several terms and in spring 2005 was used extensively in the Shakespeare course at Vanderbilt University taught by Leah Marcus, Mims professor of literature. In the coming year, Donaldson’s group will export XMAS to other campuses and move beyond the Shakespeare text/film domain to include subjects at MIT and elsewhere on film themes across the curriculum.

Professor Jenkins heads the Education Arcade project (formerly “Games to Teach”) and is coordinator of the Creative Leaders Workshop Program at Electronic Arts. He has also

launched a major new project to study new media literacies, supported by a grant from the MacArthur Foundation.

Professor Uricchio is project leader of the Cultural Identity Project within the European Science Foundation's Changing Media—Changing Europe research program (2000–2005) and is a member of the Vor-verkenning Commission, Media and Communication Studies (2004–2005) of the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences.

Associate professor Shankar Raman has been named one of the investigators for Making Publics: Media, Markets and Association in Early Modern Britain and Europe, 1500–1700, funded as a five-year collaborative project by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The project will involve 32 faculty members from seven academic disciplines from universities in Canada, the United States, Britain, and France.

Professor Buzard is coeditor of the international Monuments and Dust project on Victorian England and an active member of the Dickens Project.

### **MIT Service**

Professors Jenkins and Uricchio are codirectors of the Comparative Media Studies Program. Professor Jenkins is also a member of the Creative Arts Council and is housemaster of Senior House. Professor Thorburn is director of the MIT Communications Forum. Professor Perry serves on the Gender Equity Committee and on the Corporation Joint Advisory Committee. Professor Donaldson serves on the Council on Educational Technology and on the Integrated Communications Committee. Professor Buzard is a member of the Advisory Board of the MIT Libraries DSpace Project. Professor Fuller served on the MIT Faculty Policy Committee. Professor Raman serves on the MIT Committee on Curriculum and on the Humanities Overview Committee. Professor Henderson serves on the Task Force on the Undergraduate Educational Commons. Professor Henderson will begin a two-year term as secretary of the MIT Faculty on July 1, 2005.

### **Faculty Appointments and Promotions**

Professor Jenkins began his tenure as Peter de Florez professor of humanities this year.

Assistant professor Noel Jackson was awarded the Homer A. Burnell career development professorship and will be promoted to associate professor without tenure beginning July 1, 2005.

James Buzard will be promoted to full professor, effective July 1, 2005.

Associate professor Christina Klein is leaving MIT for a faculty position at Boston College.

Literature made one new faculty appointment this year in American/African American Literature. Sandy Alexandre, who is completing her PhD at the University of Virginia, will be joining the faculty as assistant professor of literature in fall 2005. Alexandre's research focuses on representations of space and place in African American literature

and ranges widely from 19th-century texts and images to the poetry of Paul Dunbar and Langston Hughes and the photographic records and exhibitions of lynching. She is especially concerned with the ways African American texts deal with landscape and rural space and how they complicate standard accounts of the pastoral mode in American literature.

**Peter S. Donaldson**  
**Section Head**  
**Professor of Literature**

*More information about the Literature Section can be found online at <http://web.mit.edu/lit/www/>.*