

Literature

The Literature faculty at MIT is all about balance. Along with our other humanities colleagues at the Institute, we are here to ensure that MIT's superlative students have the opportunity for a fully balanced education by complementing the subjects in science or engineering in which many of those students will major. We conduct mainly small, seminar-style classes and afford undergraduates direct and continual interaction with full faculty members—an approach one might expect to find at leading liberal arts colleges such as Williams or Amherst. At the same time, we are committed to hiring and promoting faculty whose scholarly work can compete with that carried out in nationally prominent departments of English, such as those at Berkeley, Stanford, or Harvard, where graduate-level teaching tends to take precedence over undergraduate.

Our faculty members are expected to sustain excellent records of productivity and innovation in scholarship while devoting considerable effort to general undergraduate education and doing so in an atmosphere that lacks the stimulus of a graduate program in their discipline. When we hire, we seek the special kind of scholar who can thrive in our distinctively challenging environment. We are proud of our ability to find and nurture such unique talents.

The Literature Section teaches about one-quarter of MIT's undergraduate population each year, and all of our faculty members, regardless of rank, allocate one-half of their teaching loads to introductory subjects that meet the General Institute Requirements. However, we also deliver a top-quality major to those who choose to pursue it: over the past several years we have sent literature majors on to graduate programs in English at such leading institutions as the University of California, Berkeley; the University of California, Los Angeles; Stanford; Cambridge University; the University of Chicago; and Yale University.

Literature faculty members must possess the agility to shift their approach between a generally accessible idiom and a rigorously professional one. We welcome this challenge, believing that the study of literature needs to maintain ties to broad audiences, and also that the public in general can benefit from exposure to the knowledge and skills our discipline deploys. We help students become familiar with the traditions out of which the expressive culture of our own time has evolved, and to develop the crucial skills of verbal and situational interpretation that they will draw upon later in life as citizens and professionals. What might at first appear to be our peculiar position vis-à-vis MIT and our own discipline may in fact be a position of flexibility and strength, potentially allowing us to become a national and international model for humanistic study.

Overview of 2009–2010

Literature faculty members enjoyed another productive and positive year, in spite of the challenges presented by the continuing economic crisis and by some instability in the Comparative Media Studies (CMS) program, with which the Literature faculty is deeply involved. Literature professors undertook, expanded, and refined research initiatives, published numerous new works of scholarship, were appointed to prestigious fellowships, and received numerous honors.

Teaching performance continued to be very high and some exciting new classes were launched. Our members gave numerous lectures, spreading the fruits of their research at locations around the world. Outreach efforts continued, though on a reduced scale because of the current economic situation. Our faculty served the Institute and our profession in a wide variety of roles.

Especially noteworthy is the recent naming of two of our distinguished senior colleagues to chaired professorships. Peter Donaldson is the new Ford Foundation Professor of Humanities; Ruth Perry is the new Ann Fetter Friedlaender Professor in the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. The awarding of these chaired positions is a testament to the high standard of research accomplishment toward which all MIT Literature Faculty members constantly strive. We applaud our colleagues' achievements and are delighted by the recognition they have attained.

As a unit, we continue to function very well. We enjoy a high level of collegiality and make group decisions effectively. We pride ourselves on having built a faculty in which every member, including the most junior, can participate fully in our collective deliberations. We are proud of and committed to the model of hiring new faculty with the intention of promoting them, and of giving them all the support they need to meet the Institute's stringent promotion standards. We adhere to the principle that the vast majority of our teaching should be done by regular tenure-line faculty.

New Developments and Ongoing Efforts

James Buzard continued to serve as head of the Literature faculty. He will serve for another three-year term beginning July 1, 2010.

Our strong record of faculty promotion continued this year as two of our colleagues were elevated to higher ranks. Mary Fuller was promoted to the rank of full professor and Sandy Alexandre to the rank of associate professor without tenure.

We are also succeeding in hiring the strongest of young job applicants. This year we hired Eugenie Brinkema, our top choice in an extremely competitive search for a new tenure-track assistant professor of contemporary literature and media. Brinkema joins our faculty as of July 1, 2010. During our search, we not only sought to replace our esteemed former colleague Sarah Brouillette and to maintain course offerings for a popular period in literary study, but also, and most importantly, to strengthen our commitment to the Comparative Media Studies program. Brinkema is a dazzling, widely published young film scholar who is certain to be another valuable bridge between the Literature Section and CMS curricula and research agendas. Her work on the relationship between form and affect in film promises to revolutionize the study of cinema and is sure to have significant impact throughout media studies.

Another important bridge between Literature and CMS was supplied this past year by visiting associate professor John Picker, who divided his teaching evenly between the two areas, and created new avenues for intellectual exchange between them. Picker has special expertise in the history of sound and sound recording, and designed new classes in these areas for the CMS curriculum in addition to teaching more traditional

literary subjects. We are very pleased to have renewed his appointment for another year. Another CMS-related news item is the very logical appointment of Peter Donaldson, long associated with the MIT digital humanities lab Hyperstudio, as the lab's official faculty director.

Augmenting our regular faculty during the year were theater director and actor Ricardo Pitts-Wiley, a Martin Luther King Visiting Scholar in Literature and CMS, and Joel Burges, our Mellon postdoctoral fellow, now entering his second year with us. Both enriched and benefitted from our community. Pitts-Wiley, who specializes in innovative theatrical adaptations of major literary works (such as *Frankenstein*, *Moby-Dick*, and *Don Quixote*), worked in close cooperation with senior lecturer Wyn Kelley and staged several productions involving MIT students and members of the wider metropolitan community. In keeping with the terms of his fellowship, Burges, a young scholar of contemporary American literature and media, worked in dialogue with our faculty to develop his research agenda and began to teach MIT students in the spring of 2010. He performed exceptionally well as an instructor of both Literature and CMS students and as a fresh interlocutor for our regular faculty members. Burges will be with us again this coming year, with a teaching load equally divided between Literature and CMS.

During the past year, literature professor Diana Henderson continued to serve with distinction as dean for curriculum and faculty support in the office of the Dean for Undergraduate Education's office, where she oversees matters affecting the entire undergraduate curriculum, including the Communication Requirement. In her administrative capacity, Henderson gave a keynote lecture, "Innovation from the Institutional Perspective: Who, How, Why Now, Why Not?" at the 2009 II Seminário Inovações em Atividades Curriculares at the State University of Campinas in Brazil. Her expertise as an administrator and as a curricular innovator is gaining ever-wider recognition.

A major highlight of our year was the naming of student Ugwechi Amadi, a literature double major, to a Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford.

We continued our efforts at increasing the visibility of literature and the humanities at MIT, though on a reduced scale. Our weekly literature "teas" represent an extremely cost-effective way to build a community of interested students, faculty, and staff. These gatherings provide an important resource for a growing number of our undergraduates, some of whom began their association with us by participating in our annual freshman pre-orientation program, which introduces new students to the greater Boston area by way of its storied literary associations. We also continue sponsorship of the MIT Literary Society, a vibrant student reading group. In the interest of conserving scarce resources, we discontinued efforts to bring noted contemporary authors to campus. We remain committed, however, to the idea of conducting an ongoing Visiting Authors series, possibly sponsored in conjunction with other humanities programs. Such a series could be a vital contribution to the MIT community and a forceful demonstration of the links between literary traditions and the most powerful and innovative literary work being done today. At present, our ability to fund such a series cannot be guaranteed. MIT's Council for the Arts, which along with other campus groups has helped support our

efforts so far, has cautioned us not to expect support on a predictable, recurring basis. Since our aim is to gain and hold recognition for the culture of humanistic study at MIT, we feel that sporadic events, supported by “one-off” grants, will not suffice.

We are currently conducting interviews to fill the full-time position of undergraduate academic administrative assistant. We are optimistic that we will be able to hire a very able applicant. Jamie Graham, our current undergraduate administrative assistant, has chosen to shift back to a part-time role focusing on publicity and outreach. Our excellent administrative officer Jackie Breen continued to provide exemplary oversight of every activity of our section. Jackie once again participated in the human resources training program “AO Fundamentals” as a part of the Learning Advisors Network, meeting with four program participants this past year. She will continue to be a part of this program in the coming year and has also agreed to act in an advisory role for a new human resources pilot program for administrative assistants. Our other part-time staff member, Kevin McLellan, published his first book of poetry and is teaching creative writing part-time at the University of Rhode Island. Our staff is motivated and efficient, and we feel certain its new member will be, too.

Finally, during the past year Literature faculty members were deeply engaged in discussions of a proposed reorganization within the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS) that would have merged the Literature Section with the Program in Writing and Humanistic Studies and the Foreign Languages and Literatures Section. Intensive dialogue with our colleagues in these areas and with the dean has led us to an alternate plan for reorganization that would include the elevation of the CMS program to the status of a full academic section, along with other changes. We in Literature believe that this alternate plan, to be strategized and implemented over the next few years, appropriately acknowledges our disciplinary rigor and professional standing as well as our openness to interdisciplinary collaboration, and that it will result in a stable and productive situation for the future of humanities study at MIT. We look forward to working with Dean Fitzgerald and with our colleagues to realize the plan.

Research and Publications

Literature faculty members published significant new scholarly work this year and furthered their important research agendas in numerous ways. In both individual and collaborative research projects—ranging from early modern exploration to the Victorian novel, from contemporary film and media to medieval compilations, from Shakespeare to folk balladry, from representations of the modern family to the representation of racial violence—they continue to perform at the highest levels of scholarly accomplishment.

The recognition our faculty members have attained in their scholarly fields is attested to by the frequency with which they are commissioned to write for journal special issues, volumes of scholarly essays, and companion volumes (an increasingly prominent form of publication in the discipline). James Buzard published three new pieces in such venues: “Portable Boundaries” an article on Anthony Trollope, travel, and the question of race in a special issue of *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*; “Expansion, Interruption, Auto-ethnography,” about a planned sequel to his 2005 book *Disorienting Fiction* in a

special anniversary issue of *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*; and a new essay “On Making a Spectacle of Oneself in *Pickwick*,” in a collection of essays titled *Victorian Vulgarities* (2009). A version of the Trollope piece is also forthcoming in the *Cambridge Companion to Anthony Trollope*. While working on her book manuscript on the representation of lynching violence, Sandy Alexandre expanded her interest in modern African-American drama, publishing an essay on August Wilson in the leading journal *Modern Drama*. Mary Fuller published her commissioned essay “The real and the unreal in Tudor travel writing” in Blackwell’s *Companion to Tudor Literature and Culture* (2010). Noel Jackson published “Rhyme and Reason: Erasmus Darwin’s Romanticism” in the respected peer-reviewed *Modern Language Quarterly*, and supplied on commission the short essay “Strange Power of Speech” to the British medical journal *The Lancet*, which occasionally seeks pieces on medicine and culture from highly-regarded literary critics. Diana Henderson’s essay on pedagogy, “Re-contextualizing Literary Education: A Multi-Variable Experiment in Learning and Performance,” appeared in the widely read *English Language Notes*. Ruth Perry published an article on the sexual politics of Jane Austen’s *Emma* in the Modern Language Association’s volume *Approaches to Teaching Emma*; the essay was also published in *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism*. Perry’s “The Morality of Orality: Grace Paley’s Stories” appeared in *Contemporary Women’s Writing* and her “Family Matters” in the new Blackwell *Companion to Jane Austen*. Shankar Raman’s article “Specifying Unknown Things: The Algebra of *The Merchant of Venice*” appeared in a volume of critical essays titled *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge*, published by Routledge in 2009. Stephen Tapscott published new poems in *Epoch* magazine and a new essay in *Opera News*.

Another mark of our scholarly impact is when we are asked to reprint past work. This year, Peter Donaldson’s essay from 2002 “Cinema and the Kingdom of Death: Loncraine’s *Richard III*” was selected for reprinting in the esteemed Norton Critical Edition of that Shakespeare play, and two of Diana Henderson’s previously published pieces are having an afterlife as well: “Shakespeare’s Laboring Lovers: Lyric and its Discontents” was selected for inclusion in the recent *Shakespearean Criticism: Criticism of William Shakespeare’s Plays and Poetry, from the First Published Appraisals to Current Evaluations*, and “Love Poetry” for Blackwell’s new *Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, volume II.

A look at our forthcoming work indicates our continued scholarly productivity. Buzard has placed a new essay on Victorian novelist Elizabeth Gaskell with the distinguished peer-reviewed journal *Raritan* and contributed the commissioned pieces “The Country of the Plague” (on Dickens’ *Little Dorrit*), “The Novel and Anthropology,” and “Nationalisms and National Identities” to a special issue of *Victorian Literature and Culture*, *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the British Novel*, and to the nineteenth-century volume of the *Oxford History of the Novel in English*, respectively. Diana Henderson’s completed and soon-to-be-published essays include “Afterlives: Stages and Beyond” (on Thomas Middleton), for a book contracted to Cambridge University Press; “Mind the Gaps: The Ear, the Eye, and the Senses of a Woman in *Much Ado About Nothing*,” for the Palgrave Macmillan volume *Knowing Shakespeare*; and “The Sonnet, Subjectivity, and Gender,” for the *Cambridge Companion to the Sonnet*. John Hildebidle is working on books of fiction, criticism, poetry, and memoir; he published three poems during the

past year. Shankar Raman has three forthcoming essays: “Hamlet in Motion” for the volume *Knowing Shakespeare: Senses, Embodiment and Cognition on Shakespeare’s Stage*, “Introduction: Staging the Senses” (cowritten with Lowell Gallagher) for the same volume, and “Learning from de Bry: Lessons in Seeing and Writing the Heathen” for the *Journal for Medieval and Early Modern Studies*. In addition, Raman has received a contract from Edinburgh University Press for a monograph to be called *Renaissance Literature and Postcolonial Studies*. During work on her book *Caribbean Time Slip: Disrupting Genre and Representing the Future in Caribbean Science Fiction* Alisa Braithwaite has placed a new essay, “First Lady Fashion: How the US has Embraced Michelle Obama,” in a forthcoming cultural studies volume entitled *Fashions: Exploring Fashion Through Culture*. Braithwaite also completed and submitted her piece “Locating Where to Write: Jamaica Kincaid and the Page in Front of Her” to the journal *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*.

Apart from all these scholarly ventures, Literature faculty members also continue to lead and participate in collaborative projects that model new ways of doing humanities research. The clear leader in this context is Peter Donaldson, director of the pathbreaking Shakespeare Electronic Archive, the first extensive video collection of Shakespeare’s plays available on the web. In April 2009 the Archive launched the website Shakespeare Performance in Asia and took a decisive step toward the realization of its goal of a truly global Shakespeare project. Working with partners covering Shakespeare in Asia, the Arab world, India, Brazil, and soon Mexico, Donaldson is forging new directions in humanities scholarship and teaching.

Other collaborative ventures include James Buzard’s continued work at the Hyperstudio on a project called “The Serial Experience,” designed to facilitate new research and teaching on the Victorian serial novel and to develop a template for the study and enjoyment of serialized content in all media and cultures. Wyn Kelley organized the second annual gathering of the Melville Electronic Library research team in April. This project is supported by a two-year \$175,000 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant and is mounting digital texts and producing topic “rooms” for online discussion. Shankar Raman continued to work as research associate with the project “Making Publics, 1500–1700,” a multi-year interdisciplinary research initiative funded by Canada’s Social Science and Humanities Research Council. As part of his involvement with the project, he cotaught an intensive four-week postgraduate class on Publics and Spaces at McGill University in the summer of 2009.

Fellowships and Awards

This past year’s highlights include the naming of two of our distinguished senior colleagues to chaired professorships: Peter Donaldson, as the new Ford Foundation Professor of Humanities, and Ruth Perry, as the new Ann Fetter Friedlaender Professor in SHASS. Donaldson is an internationally recognized scholar of Renaissance literature and a pioneer in the field of digital humanities whose Shakespeare Electronic Archive is expanding into a wide range of international partnerships. Perry is an accomplished and widely admired scholar of eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century British literature, a leading feminist scholar, and an authority on the relationship between literature and popular song in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The awarding of these chaired positions is a testament to the high standard of research accomplishment toward which all Literature faculty members constantly strive.

Assistant professor Alisa Braithwaite spent the year on a career enhancement fellowship sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson Foundation; Sandy Alexandre was named an alternate for the same fellowship. William Uricchio, who holds a dual appointment in Literature and in Foreign Languages and Literatures, was Bonnier visiting professor of journalism, media and communication at Stockholm University, and visiting professor of communications, University of Science and Technology of China in Anhui, China. Shankar Raman spent three months on fellowship at the Folger Shakespeare Library. Noel Jackson's book *Science and Sensation in Romantic Poetry* was shortlisted for the British Society for Literature and Science's 2009 book prize.

Encouraging signs of our faculty's productivity and recognition continue to come in. This spring we learned that Shankar Raman and Mary Fuller had been awarded important, highly competitive fellowships for next academic year: Raman at the Radcliffe Institute, Fuller, through NEH, at the Huntington Library. Fuller was also offered a long-term fellowship for next year at the John Carter Brown Library—but declined—and was awarded next year's Levitan Prize in the Humanities. We have also just learned that Fuller's proposal for an NEH summer seminar for college teachers has been approved and will bring a group of scholars to MIT during the summer of 2011 to study multidisciplinary approaches to early travel writing.

Lectures and Appearances

Literature faculty members presented their work in progress at a wide variety of academic conferences and other professional gatherings during the past year. Sandy Alexandre spoke on "Can a Lynching Photograph Be Iconic?" at a symposium on lynching in American history and culture at Haverford College. She also gave papers on the anti-lynching poetry of Angelina Weld Grimke in Paris and Boston, and she chaired a panel on "Prison in the Popular Imagination: Angola, Attica, and Abu Gharib" at an interdisciplinary symposium on The Problem of Punishment: Race, Inequality, and Justice in Charlottesville, Virginia. Alisa Braithwaite spoke on science fiction in the Caribbean diaspora at the American Studies Association annual meeting in Washington, DC. Her other lectures included "First Lady Fashion: How the US has Embraced Michelle Obama" at a conference on Fashion in Oxford, England; "Jamaica Kincaid and the Page in Front of Her" at a meeting of the Caribbean Studies Association in Jamaica; "The Work of Junot Díaz" on a panel she organized for the annual meeting of the American Literature Association in Boston; and "What Caribbean Women Writers Have Taught Me About Reading and Writing Professionally," a keynote address for the 7th annual conference of the regional Mellon-Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program at Barnard College in New York. James Buzard gave invited keynote lectures at conferences in Santa Cruz, California; at Saint Louis University, Madrid Campus; and at the Universität Wien. He also delivered panel papers at conferences in Athens and London, and conducted a three-day graduate seminar at the annual "Dickens Universe" at the University of California, Santa Cruz in the summer of 2009. Peter Donaldson spoke on "Global Shakespeare, Digital Performance Archives and New Tools for Contextualization" for an international conference on contextualizing and understanding at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the National University of Taiwan. He also gave a talk titled "Religious Rhetorics, Shakespeare Spin-offs, the Remix" at the annual conference of the

Shakespeare Association of America in Washington, DC. Diana Henderson conducted a two-day colloquium for the Northeast Renaissance Seminar at Dartmouth College. She spoke on “Where Had All the Flowers Gone? The Missing Space of Female Sonneteers in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England” at the annual meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America and gave a seminar paper for the by-invitation-only International Shakespeare Conference at Stratford-upon-Avon titled “Catalyzing What? Remediation, History, and what of *Love’s Labour’s Lasts*.” Henderson has also continued to work with local theater groups, moderating or speaking on panels for the Actors’ Shakespeare Project and the Nora Theatre Company of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The topics of Donaldson’s and Henderson’s talks show how leaders among our faculty are extending traditional literary scholarship into new areas of overlap with media studies—a result of the productive cross-fertilization that takes place between Literature and CMS.

Noel Jackson gave an invited seminar on his work titled “Reason to Lament: Causes of Melancholy in the Early Romantic Lyric” at the annual conference of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism. He also delivered a panel paper on Erasmus Darwin at the annual conference of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. Senior lecturer Wyn Kelley presented papers on her work on Herman Melville at Arrowhead and at a conference of C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists. Ruth Perry gave a talk on “Ephemera: Impermanent Works in the Literary and Visual Culture of the Long Eighteenth Century” as plenary speaker at a conference at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She also spoke on “Ballads and Songs in the Eighteenth Century” in Richmond, VA; on “The Printed Record of an Oral Tradition” at an international symposium in Anacapri, Italy; on “Balladry and The Scottish Enlightenment” for the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Studies Society in St. Andrews and the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities in Edinburgh, Scotland; and on “Brotherly Love in Jane Austen’s Novels” at the Modern Language Association annual conference in Philadelphia, PA. Shankar Raman extended his interest at the frontier between literature and mathematics, speaking on “Forming and Reforming Selves: Geometry and Poetry in Renaissance England” for a panel on “Math in Theory” at the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Conference in Atlanta, GA. He was an invited speaker on “Poesis and Geometry” for a panel on “Spatial Literacies: Theatrical and Geometrical Reformations of Space” at the Folger Library Symposium on Theatre and the Reformation of Space in Washington, DC. Raman also organized a panel for the annual meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America in Washington and gave a talk on “Specifying Unknown Things: Algebra and *The Merchant of Venice*.”

Teaching

The Literature faculty continues to teach about one-quarter of the undergraduate student body each year, playing a major role in the General Institute Requirements by offering many Communications-Intensive (CI-H) Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS) subjects as well as a wide range of middle- and upper-tier classes. Our teaching performance remains very strong, with some of our members routinely receiving student evaluation scores above 6.5 out of 7. Arthur Bahr, our most junior colleague, is a standout in this regard, more than fulfilling the high expectations we had when we

hired him. We also have four MacVicar Fellows: David Thorburn, Ruth Perry, Stephen Tapscott, and Diana Henderson. They make up one quarter of our entire faculty.

Ours is a faculty passionately devoted to excellence in undergraduate education. Toward that end, we are always innovating and seeking new ways to engage students with our rich and challenging materials. Most recently Peter Donaldson, Diana Henderson, and Shankar Raman joined with Music and Theater Arts colleagues Jay Scheib and Janet Sonenberg on a Global Shakespeare in Performance curricular initiative aimed at revitalizing the study and theatrical experience of Shakespeare worldwide. They are also collaborating with Donaldson's digital humanities partners at Penn State (on Shakespeare in Asia), Boston University (on Shakespeare in the Arab world), and the University of Delhi (on Shakespeare in India). This ambitious venture models the ways in which tradition and innovation can enrich each other.

Mary Fuller deserves special notice for so regularly setting an example for the rest of us by her active pursuit of new interdisciplinary teaching collaborations. She was recently a member of an interdisciplinary undergraduate class on the supernatural, working with colleagues from the Anthropology Program and the Music and Theater Arts Section. She has reached beyond SHASS as well, recently launching a new freshman seminar on exploration, scientific discovery, and representation with Lindy Elkins-Tanton from the Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences. Fuller has been remarkably responsive to the distinctive intellectual environment of MIT, resourcefully adapting the method and even the content of her teaching to meet our students' interests and particular needs. Together with Stephen Tapscott, John Hildebidle, and Noel Jackson, and with the support of the SHASS Teaching and Learning Fund and the Alumni Class Funds, she is currently working on an updated design of our popular CI-H subject 21L.004 Reading Poetry.

Diana Henderson has long been distinguished as a standard bearer for curricular innovation and pedagogic collaboration. Her latest venture in this context is a new variety of the CI-H Writing type of class, taken by roughly a third of MIT undergraduates. The subject 21L.010 Writing with Shakespeare, to be offered this coming autumn, will combine an intensive writing workshop experience with an introduction to Shakespeare's work. The class reflects our belief that student writing can flourish when it involves the challenge of reading and responding to subtle and profound literary texts.

In other new developments, Noel Jackson, Ruth Perry, and Shankar Raman offered new subjects during the past year. Jackson taught 21L.709 Studies in Literary History: Make It New: Manifestos and the Invention of the Modern, a Communication Intensive in the Major (CI-M) class on manifestos and literary movements. Perry stretched our students' perennial interest in Jane Austen with a class on Great Women Writers Before Jane Austen (Jane Austen's Reading List), and Raman taught Literature and Mathematics in Early Modern England (CI-M). As part of his effort to organize an interdisciplinary undergraduate class on modernity, James Buzard will teach 21L.002 Foundations of Western Culture: The Making of the Modern World this coming spring, with visits by faculty from several disciplines.

Professional and Community Service

The involvements of Literature faculty members in professional and community service are many and diverse. For example we regularly serve as executive committee members, delegates, chairs of ongoing seminars, advisory board members, manuscript reviewers for presses and journals, outside readers of PhD dissertations, doctoral defense examiners, and outside referees in tenure and promotion cases. Most of this professional activity is done by comparatively senior members of our faculty.

James Buzard is on the advisory boards of four journals: *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, *Victoriographies*, *English Literary History*, and *Journeys: The International Journal of Travel and Travel Writing*. He has been a participating faculty member of the Dickens Project at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where he lectures or conducts intensive graduate seminars each summer. After many years as co-chair of the Victorian Literature and Culture seminar of the Humanities Center at Harvard, he stepped down this past year. He reviewed grant proposals for NEH, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and the Australian Research Council. Peter Donaldson is currently acting as advisor to the NEH on a start-up grant for *The Cambridge World Shakespeare Encyclopedia: An International Digital Resource for Study, Teaching and Research*, a project of Cambridge University Press and the University of Southern California's Center for Transformational Scholarship. Mary Fuller is serving as a volume editor for the first critical edition of Richard Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation (1589–1600)* for Oxford University Press. Noel Jackson helped to organize an international conference on the poet Lord Byron held in Boston in July 2010. Diana Henderson was named a trustee of the Shakespeare Association of America (SAA) and acted as program chair and organizer for the 2009 SAA national convention in Washington, DC—a meeting attended by 900 participants. She serves on the advisory board for the Actors' Shakespeare Project in Boston, is consulting advisor to the Theater for the Emerging American Moment in New York City, is on the editorial board of *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, and continues to co-chair the seminar on Women and Culture in the Early Modern World for the Humanities Center at Harvard. Wyn Kelley was elected president of the Herman Melville Society. Ruth Perry remains co-chair of the Seminar in Eighteenth-Century Studies at the Humanities Center at Harvard. She is “motherboard advisor” to the Boston-area Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies. Shankar Raman organized a conference panel for the SAA in March 2009. He serves on the editorial board of the British *Shakespeare Journal* and reviewed essays for that periodical as well as for *Shakespeare Quarterly*. He also reviewed postdoctoral grant applications for the SSHRC.

Service at MIT

Diana Henderson is widely known across the Institute for her many forms of service to our intellectual community, and she exemplifies a spirit common among our faculty. Her work as dean of curriculum and faculty support has received widespread praise. She continues to work tirelessly and creatively on all aspects of the MIT curriculum, with special concern for the Undergraduate Educational Commons and the Communication Requirement. Henderson serves as well on the Creative Arts Council, is a participating faculty member of the Women's and Gender Studies Program (WGS), the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies, and CMS, and sits on numerous committees

connected to her administrative position. She organized and spoke on a HASS panel for Parents' Weekend and she is almost invariably on hand to host our successful Monday afternoon literature student-faculty tea. Henderson never runs out of ideas and energy to enrich the experience of the MIT community.

Noel Jackson also merits special notice this year. He performed admirably as curriculum committee chair for the Literature faculty and on the difficult Reorganization Exploratory Committee formed by Dean Fitzgerald to consider a merger of some programs. Jackson also served on the HASS Overview Committee and the advisory committee for the Kelly-Douglas Fund. His service roles were many, their tasks demanding, and he acquitted himself extremely well in all.

As mentioned above, Peter Donaldson became faculty director of Hyperstudio this year, in addition to serving on CMS's admissions and curriculum committees, on the Council on Educational Technology, on the Task Force Working Group on Information Systems, and on the Faculty Advisory Committee on Learning Management Systems. Mary Fuller was on the Faculty Policy Committee and the Subcommittee on the Communication Requirement.

Sandy Alexandre served on the selection committee for the Kelly-Douglas Essay Prize and on the steering committee for WGS. We normally attempt to shield junior faculty members from committee work so as to give them the chance to focus on advancing their scholarship, so Sandy's efforts in this regard should be given due weight. In addition to his role as head of the Literature Section, James Buzard represented the Literature faculty on the multi-section search committee to hire a new senior faculty member for CMS and was also a member of the Levitan Prize Committee. John Hildebidle served as house fellow for Next House. Alvin Kibel organized our second annual marathon reading day during Independent Activities Period. At this year's gathering, a spirited group of faculty, students, and staff read Lewis Carroll's two *Alice in Wonderland* books aloud in a variety of settings on the MIT campus. Shankar Raman was one of two HASS representatives for the MIT-Singapore Alliance being developed with the new Singapore University of Technology and Design. He also directed the Kelly-Douglas Fund and served on the Committee on Foreign Scholarships.

Other

The Literature Section has been a key incubator for the Comparative Media Studies program and remains its administrative home. Many of our faculty members have interests overlapping with CMS, either because they participated in the establishment of the program a decade ago or because they were purposefully hired with the interface between Literature and CMS in mind. We are deeply committed to reviving and sustaining the distinctive interdisciplinary enterprise of CMS. This year we were involved in the effort of hiring a replacement for former CMS director Henry Jenkins. We participated in a challenging and unorthodox multi-section search process, seeking a midcareer leader who could work well with the many interested parties at MIT and take initiative in rebuilding media studies at the Institute. After an intensive search, the committee made its recommendation, but the Academic Council ultimately refused to sanction the hire. We remain committed to rebuilding CMS and look forward to

participating in future searches. We hope sufficient resources will be available for us to hire one of the undisputed senior leaders in the quickly changing media studies field.

Conclusion

As a collective and individually, the faculty of MIT's Literature Section continues to be highly productive in research, deeply engaged in important professional and Institute business, and proficient and innovative in undergraduate teaching. We continue to enjoy excellent working relationships among ourselves, with others in the MIT community, and beyond the Institute. We look forward to expanding our contributions to MIT's curriculum and to our professional fields. We are proud of the strength and cohesiveness of our professional community.

James Buzard
Section Head
Professor of Literature

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