

Literature

MIT's [Literature Section](#) has a profile that is unusual among its peers, although not unique within MIT's School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS): internationally recognized faculty who are committed to working closely with an undergraduate population made up largely of non-majors.

Both parts of this identity matter. All of our faculty teach advanced subjects related to their research, and they also expect to do half of their teaching in introductory classes: not large lectures, but small, communication-intensive subjects intended for students in their first two years. This combination of high expectations for excellence in research with high commitment to small-group teaching, including at the introductory level, continues to define our unit.

News and Personnel

Highlights: Associate Professor Sandy Alexandre was the primary organizer of the April 2015 symposium *Our Own Devices: Tools of the Humanities*, which examined the ways in which tangible, verbal, textual, visual, and conceptual devices affect how we manage the various exigencies and problems that we encounter in our daily lives. The symposium brought in junior faculty from across SHASS, as well as several outside speakers; it received very positive feedback and had over 75 attendees. Associate Professor Arthur Bahr received a Newhouse Faculty Fellowship at Wellesley College for AY2015 and was named a 2015 MacVicar Faculty Fellow for exceptional undergraduate teaching, mentoring, and educational innovation; he joins five other current or former MacVicar Faculty Fellows on the Literature faculty. Under the auspices of the Global Shakespeare Project, Professor Peter Donaldson secured two new editors/collaborators for Spain and Portugal, enhancing the archive's global dimensions. Professor Donaldson has also begun linking materials with Digital Shakespeare Brasil, Taiwan Shakespeare Database, and HamletWorks, all collaborators with the Global Shakespeare Project at MIT. A collaboration aimed at joining the Global Shakespeare Project's materials to those of the Internet Shakespeare Editions has begun, which could result in additional funding from a major grant that is currently before the Canada Research Council. Assistant Professor Stephanie Frampton received funding from the MIT Dean's Fund for Professional Development. Professor Mary Fuller, section head, received the Institute Outstanding Veteran Advisor Award and the school's James A. and Ruth Levitan Teaching Award, a student-nominated award that recognizes teachers who make a profound difference in the educational experience at MIT. Associate professor Marah Gubar won a Children's Literature Association Honor Award for Best Article of 2013 and was awarded an honorable mention for the prestigious Oscar G. Brockett Essay Prize, an article award for senior scholars in the field of theater studies. Professor David Thorburn continued his role as director of the MIT Communications Forum, supervising five to six events throughout the year.

The year saw various arrivals and departures. Literature hosted two SHASS Diversity Predoctoral Fellows. Shermaine Jones, a PhD candidate in English at the University of Virginia, will be defending her thesis on July 16, 2015, before beginning an appointment

as assistant professor of African American Literature at Virginia Commonwealth University. Rosa Martinez, a graduate student in English at UC Berkeley, will be receiving her PhD later this summer, and she will be a postdoctoral fellow in the Literature Section in AY2016.

In the spring, Literature successfully competed for two new school-wide fellowships. In the coming academic year, we will be welcoming Joshua Bennett, PhD candidate in English at Princeton University, as a predoctoral fellow, and Mary Kuhn (PhD in English, Boston University, 2014) as the recipient of a two-year Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship.

Several faculty members were off campus for all or part of the academic year. Arthur Bahr was on leave as a faculty fellow at the Susan and Donald Newhouse Center for the Humanities at Wellesley College, where he spent AY2015 working on his second book, *Pleasurable Forms and Speculative Histories in the Pages of the Pearl Manuscript*. Associate Professor Noel Jackson was on leave for the full academic year. Professor Ruth Perry was on leave during the spring semester.

The Literature Section experienced several changes in staffing. Jacqueline Breen, administrative officer, retired after eight years of service; a new administrative officer, Alicia Mackin, will be joining the Literature Section on July 1, 2015. Lillian Lai became assistant to department head Mary Fuller after her predecessor, Corinne Spencer, left MIT to pursue her career as an artist in Brooklyn, NY.

Daria Johnson, the Literature Section's undergraduate academic administrator, received an MIT Excellence Award for Bringing out the Best Through Leadership. Among the highest honors awarded to staff members by MIT, this award acknowledges the extraordinary efforts made by members of the community toward fulfilling the Institute's goals, values, and mission.

Locally, our new website has proved an excellent tool for publicizing current news about activities and achievements, including video clips of faculty talking about what they do and why they do it. Changes in MIT's guidelines provided an opportunity to rethink our visual branding, and a new logo is in the final stages of design and is expected to be ready in July 2015. Work on a website for the Humanities Film Office was completed, with input from various stakeholders. The Humanities Film Office has also purchased a new server, which is in the final phases of testing and is expected to be installed in July 2015.

Publications, Conferences, Lectures, and Outreach

Publications

Associate Professor Eugenie Brinkema had an essay published in *Porn Archives*, a book of essays addressing the historically and culturally varied interactions between pornography and the archive. Professor Diana Henderson published "Shadow Soldiers and Precarious Unions: The Legacies of Shakespeare's History Play" in *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, one of the leading publications in the field of international Shakespeare studies.

Stephanie Frampton had an article accepted for spring 2016 publication in *TAPA*. Marah Gubar published an essay on the website Public Books, and the book *Duane Michals, Storyteller*, which included an essay written by Professor Gubar, was named one of LensCulture's 2014 Photobooks of the Year and one of Daily Beast's Best Coffee Table Books of 2014. Ruth Perry published essays in *Women's Writing in Britain, 1660–1789* (Cambridge University Press), *Oxford History of the Novel* (Oxford University Press), and the newsletter Eighteenth-Century Scotland. Associate Professor Margery Resnick continued her work on the MIT/AMITA Women's Oral History project, directing, editing, and completing nine new interviews that were deposited into the MIT archives. Professor Stephen Tapscott published a book of translations from the work of the Austrian poet Georg Trakl: *Tenderness: The Love Poems of Georg Trakl*.

Speaking engagements abroad: Sandy Alexandre gave the keynote address at the Bavarian American Academy (Munich, Germany) and was a panelist at the Black Portraits II Conference (Florence, Italy). Eugenie Brinkema presented papers at the annual conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (Montreal, Canada), the World Picture Conference (Berlin, Germany), and the Society for European Philosophy Conference (Utrecht, The Netherlands). Professor Brinkema also gave invited talks at the Affect Workshop Group at the University of Toronto, the Advanced Research Team on the History and Epistemology of Moving Image Studies (ARTHEMIS) at Concordia University (Montreal, Canada), and Cambridge University (UK). Professor James Buzard gave the keynote lecture at the annual conference of the Australasian Victorian Studies Association (Hong Kong) and was an invited speaker at the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD). Peter Donaldson was part of a panel presentation at the Shakespeare Association of America's 43rd annual meeting (Vancouver, Canada). Stephanie Frampton gave invited talks at the University of Bristol (UK) and Stanford/University of Notre Dame (Rome, Italy). Marah Gubar was one of several speakers on a panel on remembering Patsy Yaeger at the annual conference of the Modern Language Association (Ontario, Canada). Diana Henderson participated in a seminar for the European Shakespeare Research Association (Worcester, England) and the International Shakespeare Conference (Stratford-Upon-Avon, England), was the plenary chair for the Shakespeare Association of America annual convention (Vancouver, Canada), and was the respondent and chair for the annual conference of the Renaissance Society of America (RSA) (Berlin, Germany). Ruth Perry was an invited speaker at the Chawton House Library (Hampshire, UK) and gave an invited talk and took part in a roundtable on teaching Richardson at the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (Montreal). Professor Shankar Raman delivered a paper at the annual conference of the RSA (Berlin, Germany), successfully proposed a paper panel for the 2015 RSA conference (Berlin, Germany), and participated in a seminar on Shakespeare's sonnets at the Shakespeare Association of America conference (Vancouver, Canada).

US: Sandy Alexandre was an invited speaker at Northeastern University and served on panels at the Race and Visual Culture 3rd Annual Symposium at Wellesley College and the American Studies Association Conference (Los Angeles). Arthur Bahr gave invited talks at the Modern Language Association Convention (Chicago), the Medieval Academy of America Conference (Los Angeles), Wellesley College's Salon Series, the BABEL Conference (Santa Barbara, CA), and New York University. Professor Bahr

also attended the second meeting of the group *Former*, of which he is a founding member, at UC Davis. Eugenie Brinkema presented a paper at Wellesley College and gave invited talks at Harvard University, Wayne State University, Cornell University, the University of Pittsburgh, and the University of Pennsylvania, where she was also the invited keynote for Screen Textures: Haptics, Tactility, and the Moving Image. James Buzard was an invited speaker at the Victorian Literature and Culture Seminar at Harvard University. Stephanie Frampton gave invited talks at Williams College and Stanford University and was part of a special panel at the annual meeting of the Society for Classical Studies (New Orleans). Mary Fuller gave invited talks at a graduate seminar at Northeastern University; the conference Explorations, Encounters, and the Circulation of Knowledge, 1600–1830, at UCLA; and the annual American Historical Association meeting in New York, NY. Marah Gubar was an invited speaker at the University of Connecticut, Simmons College, the annual conference of the Children’s Literature Association in Richmond, VA, and the conference “Fun with Dick and Jane: Gender and Childhood” at the University of Notre Dame. Shankar Raman organized and led a seminar at the annual meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America (St. Louis, MO) and was the invited keynote speaker for the Undergraduate Shakespeare Conference at Bentley College. David Thorburn was an invited speaker in a public lecture sponsored by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Professional Service

Sandy Alexandre served on the boards of *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature* and *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*.

Arthur Bahr is a member of the planning committees for the 20th Biennial Congress of the New Chaucer Society (London, UK, 2016), the Annual Meeting of the Medieval Academy of America (Boston, MA, 2015), and the Biennial Meeting of the BABEL Working Group (Toronto, CA, 2015).

James Buzard was the co-organizer of the annual Dickens Universe at the University of California.

Peter Donaldson reviewed candidates for grants and promotions, including a tenure case at Florida State University, and a proposal for an online project on Shakespeare and dance for the American Council of Learned Societies.

Mary Fuller continued to serve as president of the American Friends of the Hakluyt Society and international representative for the Hakluyt Society in the US. In December, Professor Fuller served on a visiting committee for the provincial government of Quebec’s research funding agency. She served on the editorial board for *Studies in Travel Writing* and took part in a promotion review at the University of North Texas.

Marah Gubar continued serving on dissertation committees for former graduate students, did readers’ reports for several journal articles, agreed to review a tenure case for the University of Utah, served as a reader for numerous journal articles and books, and blurbed two books. Professor Gubar was also elected to be a member of the

Children's Literature Association and began serving her term as president of the Modern Language Association's Forum on Children's and Young Adult Literature.

Diana Henderson was an external reader for dissertation committees at Boston College and King's College (London, UK), served on the finance committee for the J. Leeds Barroll Dissertation Prize selection committee and on the board of trustees (as immediate past president) for the Shakespeare Association of America, co-edited *Shakespeare Studies*, and co-chaired the Women and Culture in the Early Modern World seminar at the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University. She served as immediate past president, trustee, and member of the executive finance committee of the Shakespeare Association of America.

Ruth Perry continued to serve on the program committee of the Folk Song Society of Greater Boston, chaired the Eighteenth-Century Studies Seminar at the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University, and read manuscripts for Ashgate, Cambridge University Press, *Philological Quarterly*, and *Women's Writing*.

Shankar Raman was an editorial board member for *British Shakespeare Journal*, a member of the Shakespeare Association of America and the Renaissance Society of America, and an external reviewer for the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University. Professor Raman was again a faculty resident fellow at SUTD as part of the MIT-SUTD program.

Margery Resnick continued to serve as president of the International Institute in Madrid.

Stephen Tapscott was a reader for various commercial and university-based presses.

Service to MIT

Literature faculty served on numerous Institute committees and other bodies. Sandy Alexandre served as a board member of the Graduate Consortium of Women's Studies, was a member of the search committee for the new dean of SHASS, served as a committee member for the subcommittee on the HASS requirement, was a member of the Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship selection committee and Burchard Fellows committee, and did freshman advising.

Arthur Bahr was a member of the Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship application evaluation committee, mentored SHASS Diversity Predoctoral Fellow Rosa Martinez, was a member of the curriculum committee, served as a senior faculty mentor to Stephanie Frampton, and served as a member of the presidential committee on distinguished fellowships.

Eugenie Brinkema was a graduate admissions reader and thesis advisor for Comparative Media Studies and a major and minor advisor for the Literature Section.

Peter Donaldson was involved with the search for a predoctoral fellow and for a new administrative officer for the Literature Section. He has also been involved with the completion of the first version of a new educational module on *The Tempest*, which will be used in the coming term at MIT and at the Singapore University of Science and Technology (SUTD).

Stephanie Frampton served as interim chair for the Ancient and Medieval Studies speakers series and was a member of the curriculum committee.

Mary Fuller served on the MIT Corporation Joint Advisory Committee, the chancellor's ad hoc committee on freedom of expression, and the nominations working group for MIT Institute Professorships; she was also a freshman advisor.

Marah Gubar was a concentration advisor, moderated an MIT Communications Forum event, co-directed an undergraduate thesis, served as a judge at the MIT INSPIRE competition, was a member of the Literature postdoctoral selection committee, and served as the assistant director of the MIT Communications Forum. Professor Gubar was also involved with the MIT Burchard Scholars, attending a local theater production and giving a talk at a dinner for them.

Diana Henderson continued to serve as dean for curriculum and faculty support, serving on the Committee on the Undergraduate Program, the Subcommittee on the HASS Requirement, the Subcommittee on the Communication Requirement, the MITx Subcommittee of the Faculty Policy Committee, the Creative Arts Council, and the MIT Council on Educational Technology, in addition to numerous oversight and leadership responsibilities within the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Education. In addition, Professor Henderson chaired monthly meetings of the undergraduate faculty officers, co-supervised affiliated postdoc Emily Griffiths Jones through August 2014, served as a panelist at the MacVicar Day symposium "Undergraduate Education Goes Global: Learning from the MIT-SUTD Collaboration," and chaired the selection process of the spring 2015 Peter S. Donaldson Prize in Literature. Professor Henderson attended the MIT-SUTD summit at MIT in June 2015, continued service as the faculty co-anchor for the weekly Literature Tea, and chaired the Women's and Gender Studies Curriculum Committee. She was also a freshman advisor.

Professor Alvin Kibel delivered three lectures to alumni on the invitation of the MIT Alumni Program.

Ruth Perry served as a transfer credit advisor, served on the affirmative action committee, played an instrumental role in successfully nominating Daria Johnson for an excellence award, and chaired the committee reading and judging Dean's Fund proposals.

Shankar Raman chaired the curriculum committee, ran the Literature workshop series, was a member of the planning committee for the Literature Section's Mobile Marathon during IAP, took part in student advising, co-supervised MIT-SUTD postdoctoral fellow Emily Jones, and participated in and coordinated the visiting assistant professor search. Additionally, Professor Raman was the director of the Kelly-Douglas Fund and a member of the Committee on Curricula (COC), the COC-CUP subcommittee on educational experiments, and the foreign fellowships committee.

Margery Resnick served as the Spanish minor advisor, served on the visiting assistant professor search committee, directed the Burchard Scholars Program, was a member of

the committee on discipline, directed the IAP Spanish II in Madrid and the MIT semester in Spain programs, and served as a faculty judge for the INSPIRE contest at MIT.

Stephen Tapscott collaborated with Professor Resnick to design the new overseas program in Madrid for IAP, and served as concentration and major advisor.

David Thorburn directed the Communications Forum and served on the committee on intellectual property.

Teaching

Mary Fuller worked in summer 2014 with the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) students of Professor Rob Miller, of the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, to develop a tool for visualizing the formal elements of language in poetry.

Diana Henderson taught a new mini-course, 21L.S90 Global Shakespeares in Performance, with Emily Griffiths Jones during IAP 2015, and picked up a section of 21L.094 Reading Poetry when the assigned instructor became unavailable. Eugenie Brinkema taught CMS.796 Forms of Love, a successful new graduate seminar in Comparative Media Studies. Alvin Kibel taught 21L.434 Fantasy and Science Fiction for the first time. Shankar Raman did a four-week residency at SUTD, where he co-taught Magic, Science, and Religion with Dr. Alastair Gornall.

Margery Resnick and Stephen Tapscott proposed and taught 21L.S88 Cultural Encounters: Insiders and Outsiders, an IAP course taught in Madrid, Spain. Professor Resnick made the housing and travel arrangements for the 27 students enrolled in the course. Outside of the classroom, students were exposed to a variety of cultural activities. Margery Resnick also worked with the Global Education Office directing two programs: IAP Madrid and the spring 2015 study abroad in Madrid. IAP Madrid, a Spanish 2 course taught in Madrid with an enrollment of 18, included videoconferencing with a class at the American University in Cairo to discuss works by Egyptian and Iranian authors that both groups were reading. For the spring 2015 study abroad program, Professor Resnick's responsibilities included securing MIT academic credit for the Madrid students, planning individual programs, securing UROP internships, ensuring students' proper enrollment in the Spanish universities, selecting students for both programs, and handling logistical details such as student orientations and housing arrangements.

In fall 2015, following intensive work by Peter Donaldson, Diana Henderson, and Shankar Raman, a new online module on *Hamlet*, developed under the auspices of the Global Shakespeare Project, was used and assessed in several classes: 21L.010J/21W.042 Writing about Shakespeare, taught by Diana Henderson; 21L.009 Shakespeare and 21L.435/CMS.830 Literature and Film, taught by Peter Donaldson; and 21L.009 Shakespeare, taught by Shankar Raman. Professor Raman is also in the process of developing other modules to be piloted at MIT and SUTD in 2015.

In IAP and spring 2015, Mary Fuller taught a second iteration of 21L.518 Literature from Anywhere, a hybrid virtual/on-campus subject supported by a grant from the Alumni Class Funds.

We saw a contraction in enrollments from a three-year average of 904 enrolled students to 776 in AY2015. Some classes had unexpectedly strong enrollments, while others fell off markedly.

In response to decisions in other SHASS units to reduce their teaching load, faculty met over a three-day retreat in May to consider a similar adjustment that, along with a redesign of the curriculum, would lead to streamlining our offerings, moving away from a model of many very small classes toward a modestly smaller number of larger classes, including more team teaching. This will be a multiyear process, but we look forward to the challenges of both editing and creating room for innovation.

Mary C. Fuller
Section Head
Professor of Literature