

Literature Section

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), which consists of 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 the Literature faculty teach advanced subjects related to research, and also expect to do half of their teaching in introductory classes—not in large lectures but in small, communication-intensive subjects (CI-H) 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 the unit.

News, Awards, and Honors

The Literature Section faculty members had a productive year. Their news and accolades are listed below. Some highlights include:

- Sandy Alexandre was offered and accepted a fellowship at the Suzy Newhouse Center for the Humanities at Wellesley College for AY18.
- Shankar Raman was one of four MIT professors named a MacVicar Fellow in 2018.

Each year, the Literature Section hosts visiting scholars and employs a number of adjunct lecturers. This year, Literature hosted one MIT Diversity predoctoral fellow, Jennifer Wang; one Mellon postdoctoral fellow, Anna Abramson; and co-hosted one MLK Scholar, Kimberly Juanita Brown.

Personnel

In addition to 16 faculty members and one senior lecturer, the Literature Section included four lecturers, three visiting scholars, three teaching assistants, one research associate, and eight administrative and support staff this year.

Visiting Scholars

- Jennifer Wang was a diversity predoctoral fellow. She is a PhD candidate at Brown University.
- Anna Abramson was a Mellon postdoctoral fellow. Abramson received her PhD in English from the University of California at Berkeley, and came to MIT after a fellowship year at Harvard University's Mahindra Humanities Center.
- Kimberly Brown was an MLK Scholar, co-sponsored with the MIT Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) Program. Brown joined Literature as a visiting assistant professor. She is an assistant professor of English and Africana studies at Mount Holyoke College.

In the coming academic year, Literature will host Anna Abramson in her second year as a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow effective July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019, and Judith Rodriguez, a diversity predoctoral fellow effective September 1, 2018–May 31, 2019.

Faculty Leaves

Several faculty members were on leave for all or part of the academic year. Sandy Alexandre, James Buzard, and Alvin Kibel were on leave for the full academic year. Ruth Perry, Shankar Raman, and Margery Resnick were on leave for the spring semester.

Administrative and Support Staff

Thomas Arabia was hired as the full-time finance and human resources assistant for the section in September 2017 after working as a temporary employee beginning June 2017. Literature also hired Cara-Beth Lillback as the part-time assistant to the section head in September 2017. Christopher Ruble, the Humanities Film Office assistant, left MIT in June 2018 for a full-time job outside of MIT that was more in line with his professional interests. Alicia Mackin, the administrative officer for the section, received an Infinite Mile Award in May 2018.

Faculty Research, Teaching, and Professional Activities

Associate Professor Sandy Alexandre's research spans the late 19th-century to present-day black American literature and culture. Her first book, *The Properties of Violence: Claims to Ownership in Representations of Lynching* (University Press of Mississippi 2012), considers how the history of American lynching violence helps us to understand how African-American literature engages matters concerning displacement, property ownership, and the American pastoral ideology. Alexandre is currently writing another book, *Up from Chattels: Thinghood in an Ethics of Black Curation*, which explores the relationship between the history of chattel slavery and black desire. The book will take as its point of departure the premise that the former, enforced condition of black Americans as fungible merchandise can haunt, inform, and morally energize, to some extent, black desire and affinity for certain material objects. This book will explore how black Americans create what Alexandre calls a "culture of significance" with material objects. Using literary analysis, studying material artifacts, and engaging the work of black collectors, Alexandre argues that such an improvised, curated, and eventually sacralized culture of subject-object relations constitutes an immanent critique of consumer capitalism. Overall, Alexandre's work takes into serious account the ways in which an ecology comprising people, places, and things can, at once, reverberate with and attempt to negotiate the various instances of racial violence that mark US history. This year, Professor Alexandre was on research leave, during her tenure of a Suzy Newhouse Faculty Fellowship at Wellesley College.

Professor Alexandre gave a number of talks over the past year, including one at the University of Virginia in September 2017, and another at the annual American Studies Association Conference in November 2017. Her service to MIT included writing the nomination letter that brought Professor Kimberly Juanita Brown to MIT as an MLK visiting scholar for AY2018. Throughout the year, she served as a mentor to both Professor Brown and the Literature Section's predoctoral fellow Jennifer Wang. She

continues in her role as a member of the MIT Faculty Policy Committee. Outside of MIT, Alexandre provided service to the Modern Language Association and American Studies Association. She also served on the board of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society*, the *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, and *Callaloo*.

In May 2018, Alexandre published an article with *Criticism: A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts* entitled, "Lovesick in the Time of Smallpox: Romancing the State of Nature in Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*." In June 2018, she submitted her essay, which she was asked to write, for a special issue of *Modern Drama*—the most prominent journal in English to focus on dramatic literature. She continues to work on her second book project.

Associate Professor Arthur Bahr is a medievalist who likes to read old books as if they were poems—that is, for how their constituent pieces (texts and pages of a manuscript, like lines and stanzas of a poem) work together to create a whole that is larger and more interesting than any of those pieces would be if read in isolation. He blends formalist and materialist approaches in order to find literary resonance in the physical particularities of medieval manuscripts. His research interests include Old and Middle English literature, the structure and interpretation of medieval books, formalism(s), aesthetics, and the idea of the literary.

In the fall semester, Bahr taught two new courses, 21L.004 Reading Poetry and 21L.434 Science Fiction and Fantasy: CS Lewis, JRR Tolkien, and Phillip Pullman: Otherworld-Building and the Problem of Belief. In the spring, he taught two sections of 21L.601 Old English and *Beowulf*, as well as 21L.705 Major Authors: Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

Service to the Literature Section included work as the chair of the curriculum committee and as a member of the junior faculty interview team. For the Institute, Bahr was a member of the distinguished fellowships committee; concentration and major advisor, ancient and medieval studies; convener of the Ancient and Medieval Studies Colloquium Series; member of the Kelly-Douglas Prize committee; and freshman advisor to five first-year students (four in fall, one in spring). He was also an invited participant at the Institute-wide Curriculum Workshop in June 2018. Additionally, Bahr was president of the MIT chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and a member of the planning committee for the fall 2017 New England Medieval Conference.

Bahr served as a peer reviewer for the editors of Oxford University Press (book manuscript), Stanford University Press (book proposal), Medieval Institute Publications (manuscript), and the journals *Parergon* and *Exemplaria* (articles). He served as an outside grant evaluator for Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (November 2017) and wrote job letters for graduate students and post-grads at Harvard University and the University of Toronto. He also served as an external examiner for a DPhil candidate at the University of Oxford.

Bahr published a refereed article, "Compulsory Figures," *ELH* 84.2 (2017): 295-314. He also published two book chapters: "Teaching *Pearl* with *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," in *MLA Approaches to Teaching the Middle English *Pearl** (Modern Language Association of America 2018) and "Birdsong, Love, and the House of Lancaster: Gower Reads Chaucer" in *Chaucer and the Subversion of Form* (Cambridge University Press 2018).

In July 2017, Bahr presented “Mediating Pearls, Manuscript, and Maiden” at the annual conference of the American Comparative Literature Association in Utrecht, the Netherlands. In October, he was an invited speaker at Medieval Poetics, a day-long symposium at Rutgers University; his talk was entitled, “The *Pearl* Manuscript and the Consolations of Geometry.” Also in October, Bahr was invited as a respondent on “Degradation, Loss, Recovery & Fragmentation,” a panel at the Mellon-sponsored conference Bibliography Across the Disciplines at the University of Pennsylvania. He was invited to speak on “Some Temporal Problems with *Patience*” at the Harvard University Symposium on Recycling, Revision, and Relocation in the Middle Ages on February 9, 2018, and on “Teaching Miscellanies” at the Renaissance Society of America in March 2018. In April 2018, he was an invited speaker at Sewanee Medieval Colloquium on Literary Form as Process.

Associate Professor Eugenie Brinkema’s research in film and media studies focuses on violence, affect, sexuality, aesthetics, and ethics in texts ranging from the horror film to the body of films dubbed “New European Extremism” to the visual and temporal forms of terrorism. She was promoted to Associate Professor with Tenure on July 1, 2017. In AY2018, Brinkema created a new course, 21L.024 Literature and Existentialism. She taught the large lecture course 21L.011 The Film Experience and the seminar 21L.706 Studies in Film: Contemporary Global Horror.

Brinkema presented papers at the American Comparative Literature Association Conference at Utrecht University in the Netherlands (July 2017), the Eighth International Conference on the Image at the Venice International University (October 2017), the World Picture Conference at the University of Toronto (November 2017), and the Dissecting Violence Conference at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (April 2018). She presented an invited response at the Boston Cinema/Media Seminar (October 2017), of which she is also a founding board member, the keynote for the Ravenstein Seminar on “Literature, Affect, and Emotion” at the Netherlands Research School for Literary Studies (January 2018), the Sawyer Seminar for the Mellon Studies in Sexuality Lecture Series at Emory University (February 2018), and workshops at the Columbia University Faculty Seminar (February 2018) and the Princeton University School of Architecture (April 2018). In July 2017, she participated in a Teaching Film & Philosophy Workshop at King’s College in London.

She published an article in the journal *Polygraph* (Duke University Press) and wrote the invited afterword for a special issue on “Cinematic Bodies” for the journal *Somatechnics* (Edinburgh University Press).

Service to the unit included minor advisor, transfer credit advisor, and mentor for predoctoral fellows. She hired and trained 21L.011 teaching assistants, and developed and co-proposed a literature minor (film track). She served on the deFlores Humor committee. She also served on the dissertation committees for a PhD student in History, Theory, and Criticism of Art and Architecture at MIT and another in the Visual and Environmental Studies program at Harvard, in addition to advising a thesis committee and being sole thesis advisor for a Comparative Media Studies/Writing (CMS/W) MS thesis. She was also an external reviewer for a doctoral thesis at Brock University. Outside of MIT, Brinkema was on the editorial boards of the journals *New Review Film*

and *Television Studies*, *InVisible Culture*, and *discourse*, and began a five-year position on the board of the flagship film and media studies disciplinary publication *Cinema Journal*.

Professor James Buzard works on 19th- and early 20th-century British literature and culture, with particular interest in the Victorian novel (Dickens, George Eliot, the Brontës, and others), modernism, the history of travel, and theories of culture and society. He is the author of two books, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to "Culture," 1800-1918* (Oxford 1993) and *Disorienting Fiction: The Autoethnographic Work of Nineteenth-Century British Novels* (Princeton 2005), as well as contributing co-editor to *Victorian Prism: Refractions of the Crystal Palace* (Virginia 2007), and author of over 40 scholarly articles. In AY2018, Buzard was on leave working on two book projects: a sequel to his book *Disorienting Fiction* and a book on Charles Dickens. For the first, he wrote a chapter on Dickens's *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*; for the second he wrote a chapter on Dickens's *Little Dorrit*. In addition, he completed an essay on *David Copperfield*, which is forthcoming in the journal *ELH*, and he published a further essay in *Dickens Studies Annual*, on *Martin Chuzzlewit*. A commissioned piece on "Race, Imperialism, Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Cosmopolitanism" in Dickens is forthcoming in the *Oxford Handbook to Charles Dickens*.

He gave the following lectures: "Landless: Authority and the Incomplete in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*," a panel paper for Northeast Modern Language Association Conference, Philadelphia, April 2018; an invited lecture, "Age of Anxiety: Autoethnography and Anticulture in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*," for the Victorian Studies Symposium, University of California, Berkeley, January 2018. He also served as discussion group leader on *Daniel Deronda* for the Victorian reading group, Boston Athenaeum, February 2018; and instructor of a three-day graduate seminar on *Middlemarch* for the Dickens Project, University of California, Santa Cruz, August 2017.

Professor Peter S. Donaldson, Ford International Professor of Humanities and Professor of Literature, is the author of *Machiavelli and Mystery of State* (Cambridge University Press 1988) *Shakespearean Films/Shakespearean Directors* (Routledge, 1990) and many articles on Shakespeare, Shakespeare on film, Renaissance literature, Machiavelli, educational technology, and digital archives. Since the late 1980s, he has also led a series of major digital projects in Shakespeare studies, including the [Shakespeare Electronic Archive](#), [Hamlet on the Ramparts](#), and the [Global Shakespeares Video and Performance Archive](#). During AY2018, Donaldson taught 21L.021 Comedy, 21L.706 Studies in Film, and 21L.009 Shakespeare. This spring he gave a plenary address on Global Shakespeare for the first week-long academic conference and performance festival to be held in Turkey at the University of Isparta.

Service to the Literature Section included serving on the search committee for predoctoral fellowship candidates. Additionally, he was a member of the SHASS Digital Humanities Committee. Outside of MIT, he took part in the faculty appointment process for the incoming president of William and Mary University. Donaldson holds numerous ongoing academic positions, including the Ford International Professor of Humanities, director of the MIT Global Shakespeare Project, director and editor-in-chief of the MIT Global Shakespeares Video Performance Archive, and a permanent fellow of the Royal Historical Society (UK).

Associate Professor Stephanie Frampton's research interests include Latin literature and material culture, ancient media and book history, and comparative approaches to classical literature. In AY2018, Frampton taught 21L.001 Foundations of Western Literature: Homer to Dante, 21L.613/614 Latin Readings/Advanced Latin Readings: Pliny the Younger's *Epistles*, and 21L.338 Reading in the Original: Lucian's *True Story*.

Frampton's service to the Institute included acting as UGOFF for the Literature Section and participating on the search committee for the MIT Libraries' Program head in Special Collections. Outside of MIT, Frampton served as president of the Andrew W. Mellon Society of Fellows in Critical Bibliography, a learned society advancing the study of historical and emerging media across disciplines and supporting scholars at early stages of their careers.

Invited talks were presented at Harvard University (September 2017, November 2017), Boston University (October 2017), the Bibliography Among the Disciplines Conference (October 2017), the Society for Classical Studies (January 2018), Princeton University (February 2018), and Columbia University (March 2018).

Frampton secured funds from the Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST) Chandler Faculty Creativity Seed Grant for a collaboration between MIT Libraries and the Cambridge Public Library on the theme "AI and Art" and continues to co-lead the MATERIA network, a group of affiliated scholars which annually hosts a cross-institutional conference on the history of the material text in antiquity. Frampton was on Old Dominion Leave in fall 2017.

Professor Mary C. Fuller is head of the Literature Section. She works on the history of early modern voyages, exploration, and colonization, with a secondary interest in cultures of reading, writing, publishing, and collecting in the period. She has published articles on Caribbean poetry, exploration narratives and video games, the dullness of travel writing, circumnavigations and their media, and on narratives of travel to Russia, West Africa, Guiana, Newfoundland, and Istanbul in the 16th and 17th centuries. Her teaching spans a broad range of topics, from poetry to scientific expeditions, and has included subjects cross-listed with CMS/W, Music, Anthropology, WGS, and Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences (EAPS).

In fall 2017, Fuller taught 21L.013 The Supernatural in Music, Literature, and Culture, a cross-listed subject with Course 21M (Music and Theater Arts), with co-instructor Charles Shadle. In spring 2018, she taught 21L.004 Reading Poetry, with a revised syllabus focused on methods of understanding the formal evidence of poetic texts. Fuller received an Office of Digital Learning (ODL) Express Exploration grant to develop a software tool for visualizing patterns of sound, stress, and syntax to support students in future iterations of the class in developing expert reading strategies.

In addition to her service as section head, Fuller advised five students. She was invited to serve on the editorial board for a new series in Maritime Humanities (University of Amsterdam Press); participated in a tenure review at Rutgers University; and composed fellowship letters.

Publications include “Experiments in reading Richard Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations* (1600),” Hakluyt Society Annual Lecture 2016 (Hakluyt Society 2017). Talks include “Discovering women in the archive of early modern exploration,” presented at Mahindra Humanities Center, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (October 2017); “Archives of Exploration, 1550-1600: how records were created and stories were told at the limits of the known world,” presented at the School of Earth and Space Exploration, Arizona State University, Phoenix, AZ (November 2017); “Narratives, modes, instructions: English maritime writing, 1553-1600,” *Negotiating Waters*, University of Grenoble/MUN, Grenoble, France (February 2017); and “Magic and science in the Davis Strait,” Renaissance Society of America, New Orleans, LA (March 2017).

Associate Professor Marah Gubar teaches and writes about children’s literature from a variety of periods, but she is especially interested in 19th- and 20th-century representations of childhood and the history of children’s theatre. During AY2018, Gubar taught 21L.015 *Children’s Literature: Imagining Alternate Worlds*, 21L.703 *Studies in Drama: American Blockbusters from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* to *Hamilton**, and 21L.449 *The Wilds of Literature*.

Gubar continued drafting her book manuscript *How to Think About Children: Childhood Studies in the Academy and Beyond*, as well as editing an essay set to come out later this year and composing two short articles slated to appear in 2018 and 2019. As part of her job as the children’s and young adult literature editor for the website *Public Books*, she contributed monthly mini-reviews of contemporary children’s and young adult literature, as well as two full-length articles: “[Empathy is Not Enough](#)” (July 2017) and “[The 90-Second Newbery: An Interview with James Kennedy](#)” (September 2017). Additionally, Gubar gave the keynote address at the University of Southern Mississippi’s graduate student conference “The Contradictions of Youth: Children and Childhood in Culture” (April 2018). She also organized and gave a response paper on a panel focused on “Children and Art” at the annual Children’s Literature Association Conference (June 2018).

Service to MIT included chairing the Undergraduate Program Subcommittee on the humanities, arts, and social sciences (HASS) requirement, which this year began conducting the first formal evaluation of all HASS concentrations. Gubar also served as a member of the Literature Section’s curriculum committee and the assistant director of the MIT Communications Forum.

Service to professional organizations serving on the executive board of the Children’s Literature Association (2015–present), as well as the editorial board of the *Journal of LM Montgomery Studies* (2017–present). Gubar also did reader’s reports for articles submitted to the *Journal of Victorian Culture* and *Children’s Literature in Education*, as well as a couple of fellowship and promotion evaluations.

Professor Diana Henderson’s areas of research and interest include Shakespeare, gender studies, early modern poetry and drama, modernism, media studies, and world drama. Her books include *Collaborations with the Past: Reshaping Shakespeare Across Time and Media* and *Passion Made Public: Elizabethan Lyric, Gender and Performance*, as well as the edited collections *Alternative Shakespeares 3* and *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare on Screen*. She has published more than 50 articles and, with James R. Siemon, she co-

edits the annual *Shakespeare Studies*. The 2014 president of the Shakespeare Association of America, Henderson has worked as a dramaturg or consulting scholar with (among others) the Potomac Theater Project, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Actors' Shakespeare Project, the New York Theater Workshop, and directors Karin Coonrod, Daniel Kramer, and Robert Lepage. She serves as principal investigator for MIT's participation with *The Merchant in Venice* performance and educational project, which includes a film collaboration with the Compagnia de' Colombari, and co-leads the Global Shakespeare Curriculum Initiative.

In AY2017, Henderson taught 21L.010 Writing with Shakespeare, 21L.704 Studies in Poetry: Songs, Sonnets and the Story of English, 21L.005 Introduction to Drama, and initiated and taught a new Independent Activities Period (IAP) subject, 21L.590 Cultural Encounters: Global Literature Abroad.

Henderson presented numerous invited talks throughout the year, including a presentation for the Digitizing the Stage: Rethinking the Early Modern Theatre Archive Conference at the Bodleian Library, Oxford (July 2016); a keynote address at the European Shakespeare Research Association in Gdansk, Poland (July 2016); a guest lecture at Chungbuk National University, Korea (October 2017); the plenary address for the International Shakespeare Conference: "Interdisciplinary Shakespeare Beyond Theory" in Cheongju, Korea (October 2017); the annual Phyllis Rackin Lecture at the University of Pennsylvania (November 2017); a talk at the Société Française Shakespeare conference in Paris (January 2018); an address to the Shakespeare and the Digital Humanities: Old and New Experiments International Seminar at Ca' Foscari University of Venice (February 2018); a paper for the Shakespeare Association of America conference in Los Angeles, CA (March 2018); a lecture (with former research associate Sarah Connell) in the Barrs Series at Northeastern University (April 2018); and was seminar respondent at the British Shakespeare Association in Belfast, Northern Ireland (June 2018).

Service to the Literature Section included serving as the undergraduate officer, faculty mentor to Associate Professor Stephanie Frampton, and supervisor to research associate Mary Erica Zimmer. She was also a member of the Austin Kelly Writing Prize committee. She served as a staff member in the Concourse first-year learning community and was curriculum chair and on the steering committee for the Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) Program. Henderson was the faculty lead for MIT's participation in the 2017 Cambridge Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Doctoral Training Partnership Conference at Emmanuel College, Cambridge University (September 2017) and a representative for the MIT Creative Arts Council. Outside of MIT, Henderson was the seminar organizer and co-chair for a monthly seminar series at the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University. She served as co-editor (with James R. Siemon) for *Shakespeare Studies* (annual journal), and continued her work on the documentary growing out of *The Merchant in Venice* project, as well as further filming of restaged performances at Montclair NJ's Peak Performances (September 2017) and at Yale and Dartmouth (June 2018).

Publications included an article in the print and online editions of *Multicultural Shakespeares* and a book chapter in *Broadcast Your Shakespeare: Continuity and Change Across Media*, ed. Stephen O'Neill, Bloomsbury Publishing (Arden Shakespeare) 2018.

Senior Lecturer Wyn Kelley teaches classes on American writers, literary genres (comedy, melodrama, gothic, autobiography), and writing about literature. Her scholarship focuses primarily on Herman Melville's works and on the intersections of traditional and new media. A founding member of the Melville Society Cultural Project, she collaborates with the New Bedford Whaling Museum on projects related to Melville and whaling. Currently associate director of the Melville Electronic Library (MEL), an interactive archive of Melville's texts, sources, and adaptations, she has also worked with MIT's digital humanities lab, the HyperStudio, to develop a classroom tool called Annotation Studio. In AY2017, Kelley taught 21L.006 American Literature: American Gothic, 21L.701 Literary Methods: Hacking the American Renaissance, 21L.310 Bestsellers: Literature Without Borders, 21L.325 Small Wonders: Collections and Citizens, and 21L.702 Studies in Fiction: Novels and Profession—all classes newly designed, and one (Literary Methods) never taught before.

Kelley served as a minor advisor for the Literature Section in fall 2017, as concentration advisor in Spring 2018, and as a major advisor in Spring 2018. She also served on Literature's Curriculum Committee. She was a Research Associate for HyperStudio, MIT's participating in pedagogy discussion groups and planning for uses of a new tool, Idea Space, for outlining essays. Outside of MIT, Kelley served on the editorial board of *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies*, as associate director of MEL (Melville Electronic Library), as ex-officio member of the executive committee of the Melville Society, and as a member of the Melville Society Cultural Project—affiliated with the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

Kelley was invited to speak at Cornell University in fall 2017; she led a graduate seminar in the English department, taught by Professor Shirley Samuels, and gave a public address at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art on Melville and an Arctic landscape painter, William Bradford. She also spoke at the New Bedford Whaling Museum in fall 2017 at a symposium on *The Ashley Book of Knots*. With funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), she worked with the Melville Society Cultural Project to develop a summer institute (June 2018) for high-school teachers: *Moby-Dick* and the World of Whaling in the Digital Age. (She was unable to attend the workshop due to family obligations.)

Kelley published a co-authored essay, "Melville and the Spoken Word" in the third Norton Critical Edition of *Moby-Dick*, edited by Hershel Parker, and an essay, "Melville's Complicating Knots" in the exhibit catalog for the New Bedford Whaling Museum's show, *Thou Shalt Knot: Clifford W. Ashley*. Her report on the Melville Society's international conference in London in spring 2017 was published in *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies* in March 2018. Her chapter, "Melville: Ocean and City," appeared in spring 2018 in the *Cambridge Companion to the American Renaissance*, edited by Christopher N. Phillips.

Associate Professor Noel Jackson works on topics in poetry and poetics, aesthetics, critical theory, and the literature of the long 18th century, particularly that of the British Romantic period. His book *Science and Sensation in Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge 2008) examined Romantic poetry and aesthetics both in relation to the 18th-century human sciences of physiology and the science of mind and in the context of momentous social

transformations in the period of the French Revolution. He has published essays in journals including *ELH*, *Modern Language Quarterly (MLQ)*, *Studies in Romanticism*, and elsewhere, and in edited volumes including *William Wordsworth in Context* (Cambridge University Press 2014) and *The Oxford Handbook of British Romanticism* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). In AY2018, Jackson taught 21L.704 Studies in Poetry: Power, Protest, and Poetry; 21L.320 Big Books: William Wordsworth's *The Prelude*; 21L.350 Science and Literature: The *Frankenstein* Project; 21L.004 Reading Poetry; and an independent study with two Literature majors.

Jackson continued as the coordinator of the Pleasures of Poetry program offered during IAP and served as both a concentration and minor advisor for the Literature Section. He served on the Levitan Prize/SHASS Research Fund selection committee, and continued to serve as an advisory board member of MAKE IT NEW: an international platform for poetry education (2015–present).

Professor Alvin Kibel's research interests include the history of ideas, literary theory, film, ethics and literature, and Darwin studies. He initiated the study of film as a subject in the Literature curriculum and initiated various other Literature subjects. Kibel was on leave for all of AY2018.

Professor Ruth Perry's research interests include balladry (the earliest known poetry in English), orality and literacy, women's cultural traditions, the Scottish Enlightenment, fiction, the early English novel, 18th-century British literature and British women's writing, Jane Austen's life and writings, feminist literary theory, and folk music of the British Isles and North America. Perry's recent work has been about 18th-century Scotland and the family of Anna Gordon, later Mrs. Brown, an 18th-century Scotswoman who was the first individual ballad-source whose repertoire was deliberately sought out (and published) by Walter Scott, Robert Jamieson, Thomas Percy, and other writers and intellectuals of the period. Gordon's is the oldest known repertoire of Scottish ballads from a living source. Professor Perry was on leave for spring term AY2018.

Service to the Institute included continuing to serve as a member of the Technology and Culture Steering Committee, the steering committee of the WGS program, and the faculty newsletter—even though she has been on leave for half of this year. Perry continues to serve as a member of the Folk Song Society of Greater Boston program committee, and continues to chair the 18th Century Seminar at Harvard's Mahindra Humanities Center. As founder of the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies (GCWS), she worked tirelessly to bring the GCWS back from the brink of disaster after a long period in which the coordinator had not been replaced and no business was going forward. She called and chaired a large meeting of feminist intellectuals from Boston and Cambridge universities in December and wrote and spoke throughout the spring to get this institution back on track. She also acted as a consultant and read manuscripts for Cambridge University Press, Broadview Press, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, and *Eighteenth-Century Life*.

In November, she toured several campuses in North Carolina, lecturing and singing ballads. She began in Chapel Hill, singing and lecturing to several University of North Carolina groups there. Then she went to Boone, NC, where she sang and lectured for two more days at Appalachian State University to faculty and student groups.

In addition to writing several chapters of her biography-in-progress of Anna Gordon during the spring, Perry reviewed a new book by Paula McDowell, *The Invention of the Oral: Print Commerce and Fugitive Voices in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, just published by the University of Chicago Press for the *Journal of Folklore Research*. The review should be out by the fall.

In April, she chaired a session on “Ballads and Songs in the Eighteenth Century” at the annual meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies in Orlando, Florida, to encourage research on these topics.

Professor Shankar Raman’s research focuses on Renaissance and late-medieval literature and culture, colonialism and post-colonialism, history of ideas, history of science, and literary theory. In AY2018, Raman taught 21L.009 Shakespeare (16 students, partly new material, since deploying the *Merchant of Venice* module for the first time) and 21L.451 Literary Theory (eight students), both in fall. In spring 2018, he was on parental leave and was named MacVicar Teaching Fellow by the Institute for contributions to MIT undergraduate teaching.

Seminars and colloquia included: “Emerging Methodologies,” Roundtable at the Society for Literature, Science and the Arts, Tempe AZ, Nov. 9-12; “Utopian Hybrids,” paper submitted for the seminar *Foucault Beyond New Historicism* at the Shakespeare Association of America Conference, Los Angeles, CA, March 28–April 1; “Margaret Cavendish and the Varieties of Non-Being,” at the British Society for Literature and Science Conference, Oxford, UK, April 5-7, 2018; and “Thinking Small: Infinitesimals and the early modern literary imagination,” Mediterranean Studies Association Conference, May 30–June 2, 2018, in Sorrento, Italy.

During 2017, two of Raman’s articles appeared in print in refereed essay collections: “Leibniz, Milton, and the Measure of Motion” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Early Modern Literature and Science*, edited by Howard Marchitello and Evelyn Tribble (London and NY: Palgrave Macmillan), 277-294; and “‘Thou single wilt prove none’: Counting, Succession, and Identity in Shakespeare’s Sonnets,” in *The Sonnets: The State of Play*, edited by Elizabeth Scott-Baumann, Hannah Crawforth, and Claire Whitehead (London: Bloomsbury). He is currently working on a manuscript entitled *Before the Two Cultures: Mathematics and Literature in Early Modern Europe*.

Raman’s service to the Literature Section included serving as a member of the curriculum committee. He was also primarily responsible during the spring semester for putting together the new Literature and Film Minor proposal as well as research on comparable Literature minor requirements at peer universities. He assisted Diana Henderson and Erica Zimmer with development of an online module on Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*. Additionally, he served as concentration advisor and also primary advisor in Literature to one student. Service to the Institute included participation on the foreign scholarships committee and serving as director of the Kelly Douglas Fund.

Service to professional organizations included reading applications for Radcliffe Centre for the Humanities at Harvard University; acceptance to the editorial board of *Shakespeare Studies*; a review of a book proposal and service as an external reader of a

manuscript for Palgrave Macmillan; review of an article for *Mosaic*; and input on an application for a junior research fellowship at St. Catherine's College, Oxford.

Associate Professor Margery Resnick's research interests include Hispanic literature and film, literature and culture of post-Franco Spain, European Fiction, international women's writing and film, the cultural history of globalization, and the history of women at MIT. Resnick initiated MIT's program in Spanish literature and culture, established the program in English as a Second Language, and made it possible for MIT students to study Chinese. Resnick's current research focuses on the history of women at MIT. She is director of the MIT/AMITA (Association of MIT Alumnae) Women's Oral History project, which seeks to chronicle and record the ways in which an MIT education, with its emphasis on problem-solving, shaped individual lives; 20 new oral history interviews were completed and placed in the MIT archives this year. During AY18, Resnick taught 21L.020 Globalization: The Good, the Bad, and the In-Between (co-taught with Joaquin Terrones, 47 students) and 21L.S88 The Spanish Incubator (IAP course). She was on sabbatical in spring, 2018.

Service to the Institute included serving as a major advisor to a graduating major whom she nominated and supported for the Rhodes Scholarship and as a minor advisor. Resnick continued her service to MIT as director of the Burchard Scholars program and a judge at the INSPIRE competition. She gave presentations to parents about Global Opportunities at MIT (August 2017, October 2017). She supported the new IAP course in London by securing a teaching space and housing arrangements for our students. Outside of MIT, Resnick continued to serve as the president of the International Institute in Spain, and has worked on the planning of a major library renovation there. She also acted as a consultant for language programs at the Brookline Public Schools. She spoke in Madrid (January 2018) in the symposium One Spain, Many Cultures: A Pluralistic View of Contemporary Spanish Art, Literature, and Music on the relationship between Catalán writers like Carme Riera and their contemporary Spanish counterparts like Carmen Martín Gaité. She taught a four-day workshop for 15 senior faculty members of the Carlos Tercero University in Madrid on "Innovative Strategies for the College Classroom." This success of this workshop led to an invitation to repeat it annually. She organized and ran a symposium in Madrid on women documentary filmmakers that took place in June 2018. Because of health issues, she could not attend.

She also ran a large program for the Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid. This is a major pedagogical initiative and professional development program for Madrid teachers who get the chance to learn from workshops run by American educators. (July 2018).

Resnick and Joaquin Terrones worked during spring 2018 on their new d'Arbeloff-supported course, *Medical Narratives: Compelling Accounts from Antiquity to Grey's Anatomy*, to identify medical professionals who will mentor students in this new subject even as they worked on the curriculum. This course will be offered in spring 2019.

Resnick dedicated her sabbatical to focusing on the MIT/AMITA women's oral history project. The leave enabled her to supervise five Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) students and to complete twenty interviews. She worked on organizing the voluminous material thematically in order to present a book proposal.

Professor Stephen Tapscott is a poet whose fields of interest include creative writing (poetry, experimental prose), poetry as a literary genre, and translation. His academic interests include North-American writing (especially Walt Whitman, Anglo-American modernists, writers since World War II); Latin-American poetry; world poetics in Russian, German, and Polish; autobiography; gender studies and queer studies; photography and other visual arts; and translation. During AY2018, Tapscott taught 21L.004 Reading Poetry and 21L.508 Translations, a new subject in the HASS-Arts category.

Service to the unit included serving as a major advisor and UROP advisor. Tapscott additionally served as a judge for CMS/W contests and as an advisor/member for a writing project. Outside of MIT, Tapscott served on the board of the British and American Literature Association and the board for the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. He also served as an external evaluator for the Italian National University evaluation/accreditation system and was an external reader for several university presses. In January, he was a poet-in-residence at the Ilhabela Arts Institute in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Tapscott had essays appear in several anthologies, including *Into English* (an essay on comparative translations of poems by Paul Celan) and *Detective Fiction* (an essay on the influence of crime fiction and psychological theories of the return-of-the-repressed in Orson Welles's film *Citizen Kane*). Several of his poems and translations were set to music for various instrumentations and performed in New York and Boston and Seattle. An artist in New York opened a show in which she exhibited 28 paintings deriving from a single line in a Pablo Neruda poem translated by Tapscott.

Professor David Thorburn is the author of *Conrad's Romanticism* and many essays and reviews on literary, cultural, and media topics. He has edited collections of essays on romanticism and on John Updike, as well as a widely used anthology of fiction, *Initiation*. Recent publications include the co-edited volumes *Democracy and New Media* and *Rethinking Media Change*, volumes in the MIT Press series "Media in Transition," of which he was editor-in-chief.

Two of Thorburn's MIT courses are reaching audiences beyond the Institute. His lecture series, "Masterworks of Early 20th-Century Literature," a version of his MIT undergraduate course, is available in DVD and audio versions from The Teaching Company, and his long-running MIT lecture course, "The Film Experience," is now accessible on YouTube as well as MIT's OpenCourseWare platform.

Current writing: Thorburn has completed a book of poetry, some of whose entries have been published in leading magazines. He's doing final revisions on a collection of his previously published essays on TV, with a new historical essay titled "Story Machine," based on lectures he gave two years ago at the Boston Public Library. He continues to write poems.

During AY2018, Thorburn taught 21L.702 Studies in Fiction: Joyce, Woolf, and the Legacy of Modernism; 21L.003 Reading Fiction; and 21L.011 The Film Experience.

Thorburn served as a minor advisor for the Literature Section and is the director emeritus of the Communications Forum, now directed by Seth Mnookin of CMS/W. Outside of MIT, he was an occasional reader for various scholarly journals in media and literature, as well as for university and trade publishers.

Digital Humanities

The digital humanities are supported by the Literature Section's technology support specialist, Belinda Yung, who works to foster and support digital humanities research and teaching among the faculty. Her work focuses on helping faculty to integrate digital media and technology in the classroom, supporting researchers and scholars at partner institutions, and exploring new ways for active learning.

The [Global Hamlet in Performance](#), [Global Tempest in Performance](#), and [Global King Lear in Performance](#) online study modules continue to be used in Shakespeare subjects offered by the Literature Section. They are limited to students enrolled in MIT subjects since they contain some copyright-protected material. A [new Hamlet module](#) clear of media under copyright and designed for the general public is now available, but requires user registration before access is granted. A [separate study module](#) for *The Merchant of Venice* was initially released in spring 2017, and enhancements were made during summer 2017 and summer 2018. All the modules have recently had software updates to address video playback compatibility with newer web browsers and mobile devices.

Professor Peter Donaldson worked with Belinda in April on his Shakespeare talk for the [2018 Shakespeare Festival and International Conference on English](#) held at Suleyman Demirel University in Isparta, Turkey. They are also actively working with a programmer to enhance video viewing and sharing for the [MIT Global Shakespeares Video and Performance Archive](#). A [new site](#) will launch in fall 2018.

Teaching

In addition to the subjects and other teaching information listed above for each faculty member, there were a number of collaborative and innovative teaching efforts.

Margery Resnick again organized and taught 21L.S88 Cultural Encounters: Insiders and Outsiders during IAP in Madrid, Spain. This was the fourth year the class was offered; 28 of the 100+ students who applied were accepted and participated in the program overseas. Housing and travel arrangements were made by Resnick, who also taught the class. Outside of the classroom, students were exposed to a variety of cultural activities. Students paid a program fee to participate, and the Literature Section supplied the funds needed to house the faculty member.

The Literature Section expanded the IAP abroad offerings this year to include a class in London (Literary London). This was the first time this subject was offered and it was led by Diana Henderson. Henderson secured \$15,000 in funding towards the program from the MIT Global Classroom Fund to defray student program costs. The program was wildly popular with over 70 students applying for the 15 available spots.

Enrollments

Enrollments have been slightly lower in recent years than they have been in the past. AY2018 enrollment totals were 728 compared to a three-year average of 771 (701 in AY2017, 819 in AY2016, and 794 in AY2015). One reason for lower enrollments is probably increased competition among humanities sections: students have many more options to choose from than they once had, and it is not uncommon for classes in adjoining sections to overlap in materials covered and semester offered. Better planning among neighboring sections should alleviate some of this problem. Visibility remains a problem, as well. Literature hopes to work with the leadership of SHASS and with the MIT administration to improve the visibility of this field and to make more transparent to MIT undergraduates the value of studying literature.

Mary Fuller
Head
Professor of Literature