

# Lit News

## INAUGURAL EDITION OF LIT NEWS

In this inaugural edition of Lit News, we highlight faculty initiatives, new academic programs, student activities, awards and publications. As you will see, there has been quite a bit going on in Literature at MIT this past Spring and Summer. We hope you find this issue useful and informative.

Please let us know (at [LIT@MIT](mailto:LIT@MIT)) of any news you would like to share with our community. We hope to see you soon in a Literature class or at a Literature event at MIT.

Professor James Buzard, Section Head

## STEPHEN TAPSCOTT RECIEVES MACVICAR TEACHER AWARD

At a gathering at Gray House on March 7, 2008, MIT President Susan Hockfield announced that Literature Professor Stephen Tapscott had been named a MacVicar Faculty Fellow.



Considered MIT's highest teaching prize, the Margaret MacVicar Faculty Fellowship has been awarded to a select number of professors each year to honor their exemplary and sustained contributions to the teaching and education of undergraduates at MIT. Literature now hosts three MacVicar Fellows, also including Professors David Thorburn and Ruth Perry.

## ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR NOEL JACKSON AWARDED TENURE



Associate Professor Noel Jackson was awarded tenure this past Spring.

A valued member of the Literature Faculty, Professor Jackson teaches eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature with a focus on British Romanticism. His first book, *Science and Sensation in Romantic Poetry*, examines the preoccupation of Romantic poets with the organs and activities of sense perception in relation to the human sciences of the period, and in the context of momentous social transformations in the period of the French Revolution.

Professor Jackson is teaching 21L.470 Eighteenth-Century Literature this Fall.

## 2008 LITERATURE PRIZE FOR DEDICATION TO STUDIES IN LITERATURE

Graduating major Gayle Denman was awarded the 2008 Literature Prize for Dedication to Studies in Literature. The Literature Section surprised Gayle with the announcement on May 12th at Monday Tea.



Gayle was recognized by the Literature faculty as an exceptional student. Several faculty spoke of Gayle and her accomplishments including Senior Lecturer Wyn Kelley, and Lecturers Howard Eiland and Ina Lipkowitz.

Dr. Lipkowitz recalled the wonderful essays Gayle wrote in the first class she took with her (Reading Fiction, or as it was then called, Introduction to Fiction), and how pleased she was when she saw her name on the registration list for the Bible class she taught the next semester—and then again, on the list for the English Novels class the following year. “Gayle is exactly the kind of student a teacher most remembers,”

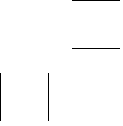
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Tell us what you're musing! Poetry, haiku, and literary and academic excerpts by students and faculty will be published in the Musings section on Page 4 of Lit News. Please direct submissions to [jamiectg@mit.edu](mailto:jamiectg@mit.edu).







# Honors, Awards, and Publications

## LITERATURE FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

The Literature Section celebrated faculty whose scholarly works were published during the past year with a reception in their honor on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008. During the celebration, each author read excerpts from his or her work.

Books published in AY 2008 include:

**Sarah Brouillette**, *Postcolonial Writers in the Global Literary Marketplace*, Palgrave

**James Buzard**, *Victorian Prism: Refractions of the Crystal Palace*, Co-Editor, University of Virginia Press

**Diana Henderson**, *Alternative Shakespeares 3*, Editor, Routledge

**Noel Jackson**, *Science and Sensation in Romantic Poetry*, Cambridge University Press

**Wyn Kelley**, *Herman Melville: An Introduction*, Blackwell Publishing

**Wyn Kelley**, *Whole Oceans Away: Melville and the Pacific*, Co-Editor, Kent State University Press

**Ruth Perry**, *Ballads and Songs in the Eighteenth Century*, special double issue of *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, Editor, Texas Tech University

**Ruth Perry**, Charlotte Lennox's *Henrietta* (1758), Editor, University of Kentucky Press series of Eighteenth-Century Novels by Women

**David Thorburn**, *Masterworks of Early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Literature*, DVD lecture series, The Teaching Company



## New Initiatives in Curriculum Development

### PROFESSOR ALVIN KIBEL RECEIVES 2008-2009 ALUMNI CLASS FUNDS FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Professor Kibel received funds to develop an undergraduate subject in Leadership Ethics. The subject will be designed to employ ancillary materials such as extracts from important works of ethical philosophy, and case studies drawn from areas of professional experience.

However, major emphasis will fall upon the applicability of ethical concepts to the understanding of decision-making in positions of authority. Although the subject will initially be taught by one faculty member on an experimental basis, it is hoped that the content and instruction will be drawn from other departments as well.

### PROFESSOR JAMES BUZARD RECEIVES SHASS TEACHING INNOVATION FUND AWARD

James Buzard, Head and Professor of Literature, and Mark Jarzombek, Professor of the History and Theory of Architecture, from the School of Architecture, were awarded a grant to develop an undergraduate course on the subject of Modernity.

The course - provisionally entitled "Welcome to the Modern World" - will aim to introduce the question of what being modern means from the vantage points of the various disciplines that would provide students with a superbly appropriate introduction to the Institute where they have come to study and to the world they will enter after graduation. The subject will combine philosophical and theoretical readings on modernity with a series of case studies of distinctively modern challenges or paradoxes.

### OTHER AWARDS

**Sandy Alexandre** was awarded a Postdoctoral Fellowship at Brown University's Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women and Research on Women for the Academic Year 2009.

**Noel Jackson** received a Visiting Scholarship at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, Germany, for the summer of 2008.

**Ruth Perry** was a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities in Edinburgh during the Spring 2008 term.

**Stephen Tapscott** was the recipient of the Witter Bynner Foundation Poetry Translation Residency. He will be in residence at the Santa Fe Art Institute.

## MONDAY TEA

WEEKLY 4:30-6:00

Every Monday during the semester (except holidays), Literature hosts an afternoon tea where faculty, staff, and students come together to talk about what's going on in their world. There is no agenda: there are one-on-one or group discussions about classes, hobbies, books read, etc. In addition to light refreshments, each week a new kind of loose-leaf tea will be introduced to invite students to experience the diverse, varied world of tea.

We look forward to seeing you at Tea!



## CELEBRATING SENIORS

A dinner in celebration of graduating Lit majors was held at The Elephant Walk Restaurant in Cambridge on June 3rd.



Pictured: Professor Stephen Tapscott, Lecturer Anne Fleche, Sr. Lecturer Wyn Kelley, Gayle Denman, Lara Kostun, Undergraduate Academic Administrator Jo Choi, Susan Wilson, Professor Diana Henderson, Dan Denis, and Literature Faculty Head James Buzard.

## PROGRAM IN ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL STUDIES

Through a wide variety of subjects drawn from a number of disciplines, including Literature, Philosophy, and History, the program provides a curricular framework for exploring topics in ancient and medieval studies which range from the history of ideas and institutions to that of material artifacts, literature and certain original languages. The chronological span of the program includes some 6,500 years between 5000 B.C. and 1500 A.D.

The goal of this program is to develop knowledge and understanding of the more distant past both for itself, in its uniqueness, and as an object of specifically modern questions and methods of inquiry.

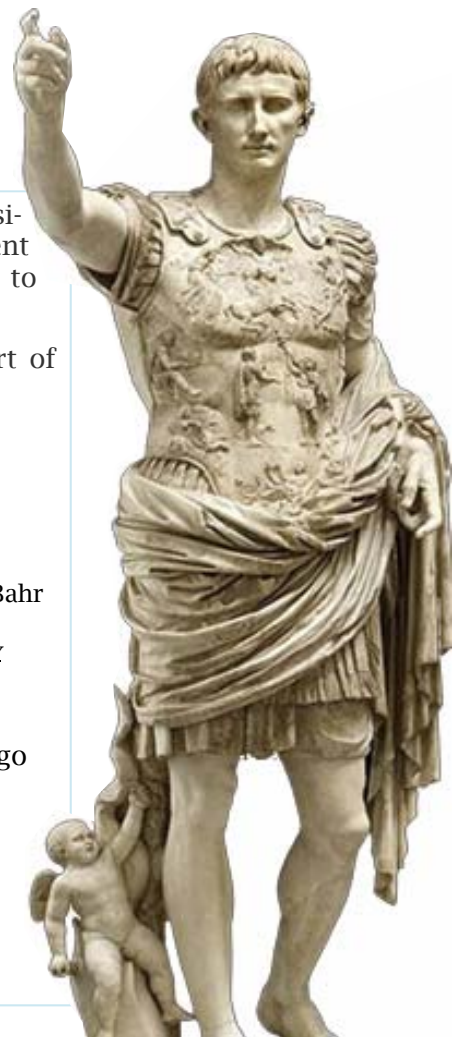
The **Minor Program in Ancient and Medieval Studies** is designed for students who, in addition to the focus of their major program of study, are seeking a fuller understanding of the forces which shaped the ancient and medieval world.

Subjects range in content from Classical Greece and Rome, and the ancient societies of Asia and South America, to medieval Europe and Japan.

Courses offered by Literature as part of the Program curriculum include:

- 21L.330 *Latin I* / 21L.335 *Latin II*  
Professor Yumna Khan
- 21L.460 *Medieval Literature: Legends of Arthur*, Professor Arthur Bahr
- 21L.001 *Foundations of Western Culture: Homer to Dante*, Prof. Arthur Bahr
- 21L.455 *Classical Literature*, Staff
- 21L.320 *Big Books: Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, Professor Arthur Bahr
- 21L.993 *Studies in Poetry: Latin*, Staff

To find out more about the Program go to: <http://web.mit.edu/shass/undergraduate/programs/minors/fields/ancient.shtml>







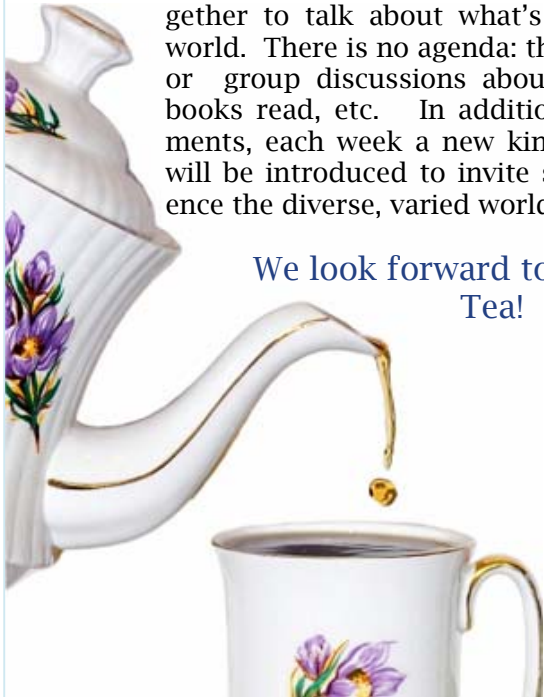
# Events at Lit

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To find out more about the Program go to: <http://web.mit.edu/shass/undergraduate/programs/minors/fields/ancient.shtml>









## STUDENT ADVISORS FOR 2008-2009

### *Concentration Advisors:*

John Hildebidle 14N-434 253-4452 jjhildeb@mit.edu  
Arthur Bahr 14N-424 253-3616 awbahr@mit.edu

### *Minor Advisor:*

David Thorburn 14N-335 253-6950 thorburn@mit.edu

### *IAP/Wellesley Coordinator:*

Mary Fuller 14N-414 253-8848 mcfuller@mit.edu

### *Transfer Credit Examiner:*

Peter Donaldson 14N-431 253-1447 psdlit@mit.edu

### *Undergraduate Officer:*

Alvin Kibel 14N-438 253-3580 akibel@mit.edu

### *UROF Coordinator:*

Jacqueline Breen 14N-407 253-5581 jbreen@mit.edu

## FPOP: DISCOVER LITERATURE 2008

Eleven new students, two upperclassmen and a professor traveled across space and time to explore Boston's unique literary history. Emerson, Thoreau, Alcott, and Hawthorne introduced their favorite abodes and respites in Boston, Salem and Concord to some of MIT's newest literature enthusiasts. Favorite stops included the House of Seven Gables, the Black Heritage Trail, and Captain Dusty's Ice Cream!



Pictured: Ana Lyons, Rachel Williams, Phyllis Yan, Jessica Wooton, Lauren Ouellette, Professor Sandy Alexandre, Camila Caballero, Siraj Ali, Sarah Miles, Katie Silberstein, Simone Agha, Tara Sarathi, Jingyun Fan, and Reuben Aronson.

## Musings

### **Did I Miss Anything?**

by Tom Wayman

*Question frequently asked by students  
after missing a class*

Nothing. When we realized you weren't here we sat with our hands folded on our desks in silence, for the full two hours

Everything. I gave an exam worth 40 percent of the grade for this term and assigned some reading due today on which I'm about to hand out a quiz worth 50 percent

Nothing. None of the content of this course has value or meaning

Take as many days off as you like:  
any activities we undertake as a class  
I assure you will not matter either to you or me  
and are without purpose

Everything. A few minutes after we began last time a shaft of light suddenly descended and an angel or other heavenly being appeared and revealed to us what each woman or man must do to attain divine wisdom in this life and the hereafter  
This is the last time the class will meet before we disperse to bring the good news to all people on earth.

Nothing. When you are not present how could something significant occur?

Everything. Contained in this classroom is a microcosm of human experience assembled for you to query and examine and ponder  
This is not the only place such an opportunity has been gathered

but it was one place

And you weren't here.

(Continued from page 1)

says Dr. Lipkowitz. "She is smart, insightful, generous, curious, hard-working, kind, and compassionate."

While at MIT, Gayle was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, an associate editor of MIT's Undergraduate Research Journal, and Senior Literary Editor of *The Triple Helix: The International Journal of Science, Society, and the Law*.

Gayle has tremendous compassion for those who have not been as lucky as she. Her 2007 article "The Economic & Cultural Implications of the HPV Vaccine" is a perfect example of her concern for those with limited access to healthcare, and gives us a foretaste of what's to come in her life after MIT.

Gayle will be attending Stanford Law School in the Fall.

### Lit News

<http://lit.mit.edu>

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