Associate Professor Noel Jackson Awarded Tenure

In this inaugural edition of Lit News, 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.

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 jamiecg@mit.edu.

Stephen Tapscott Receives 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.

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,” says Dr. Lipkowitz. “She is smart, insightful, generous, curious,
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 15th, 2008. During the celebration, each author read excerpts from his or her work.

Books published in AY 2008 include:

- James Buzard, *Victorian Prism: Refractions of the Crystal Palace*, Co-Editor, University of Virginia Press
- Wyn Kelley, *Herman Melville: An Introduction*, Blackwell Publishing
- Ruth Perry, *Ballads and Songs in the Eighteenth Century*, *Henrietta (1758)*, Editor, University of Kentucky Press series of Eighteenth-Century Novels by Women
- David Thorburn, *Masterworks of Early 20th-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 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.
Events at Lit

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 Wynn Kelley, Gayle Freeman, Lisa Kostin, Undergraduate Academic Administrator Jo Choi, Susan Wilson, Professor Diana Henderson, Dan Denie, and Literature Faculty Head James Heustis.

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
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 respite 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, Tina Seretti, Jingyun Fan, and Reuben Aronson.

(Continued from page 1)

Did I Miss Anything?
by Tom Wayman

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 before we disperse to bring the good news to all people on earth.

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.

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