

Report on the Job Information List, 2007–08

In 2007–08 the number of jobs advertised in the *MLA Job Information List (JIL)* continued its recent upward trend, increasing by 89 (5.6%) in foreign languages and by 33 (1.8%) in English. In the *JIL*'s English edition a total of 1,646 listings announced 1,826 jobs; in the foreign language edition 1,522 listings announced 1,680 jobs. Since the recent low in 2003–04 the number of jobs announced in the *JIL* has increased by 395 (30.7%) in the foreign language edition and 287 (18.6%) in the English edition. Figure 1 shows the trend lines for the numbers of jobs advertised in the *JIL*'s English and foreign language editions over the 33-year span 1975–76 to 2007–08. Over more than three decades the trend lines have followed closely those of the wider United States economy and state tax revenues.

Ads indexed for the rank of assistant professor made up 990 (60.1%) of the 1,646 ads in the English edition and 779 (51.2%) of the 1,522 ads in the foreign

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On 24 April 2008 MLA Executive Director Rosemary G. Feal delivered the keynote address during the conference *Fostering Translingual and Transcultural Competence*, held at Georgetown University. The conference included discussion of the report from the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, "Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World," as well as a writers' panel and a session on best practices in teaching. Pictured (left to right) are Nicoletta Pireddu, Kevin Doak, Serafina Hager, Milena Santoro, Feal, Marcia Morris, Philip Kafalas, and Emily Francomano.

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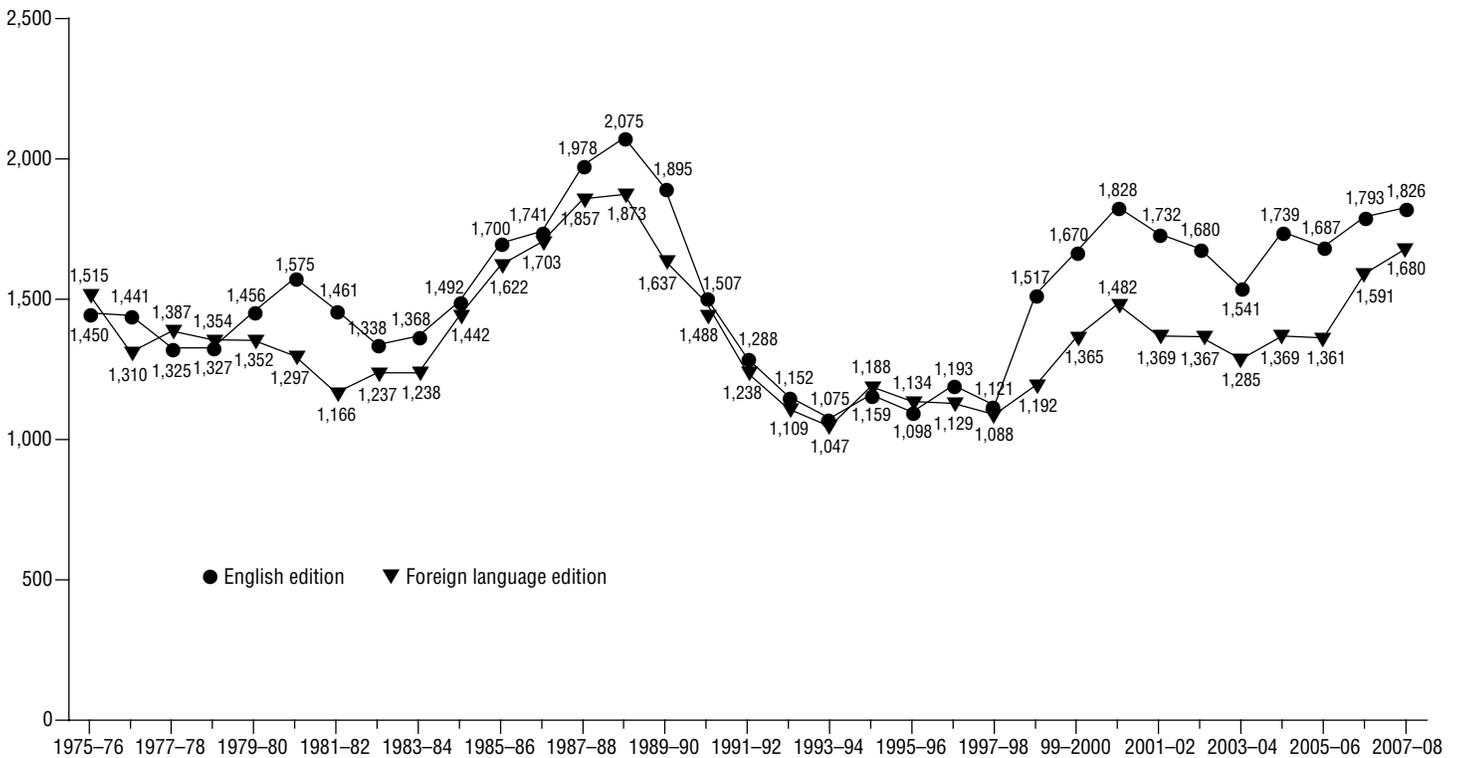
language edition. An additional 241 (14.6%) ads in English and 231 (15.2%) in foreign languages called for assistant professor plus another rank. Ads indexed as tenure-track accounted for 1,244 (75.6%) of the 1,646 total in En-

glish and 906 (59.5%) of those in foreign languages. Overall, 1,069 (64.9%) of the ads in English were tagged as both tenure-track and assistant professor (including combinations with other ranks); 877 (53.3%) were both tenure-track and assistant professor and called for no other rank. In the foreign language edi-

tion 775 (50.9%) of all 1,522 ads were tagged as both tenure-track and assistant professor (including combinations with other ranks); 634 (41.7%) were both tenure-track and assistant professor and called for no other rank.

David Laurence

Fig. 1
Total Number of Positions Advertised in the MLA Job Information List, 1975–76 to 2007–08



GOVERNANCE

2008 Election Ballot to Be Mailed

The 2008 ballot covering the elections for second vice president, Executive Council, Delegate Assembly, and division executive committees will be mailed early in October to all 2008 MLA members. Ballots must be received at the MLA office on or before 10 December to be counted. The ballot sheet contains instructions for retrieving candidate information from the members-only area of the MLA Web site.

To enter this area, you will need to log in with your current member number or user name and your password. If you do not remember your current log-in information, you can retrieve it by visiting www.mla.org and selecting Change Your User Name and Password or by contacting the MLA membership department (646 576-5151; membership@mla.org). Members who do not have access to the Web or who do not wish to retrieve documents from the Web should request a printout of the candidate information from the coordinator of governance before 10 November (MLA, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789; fax: 646 576-5107; governance@mla.org).

If you are eligible to vote and do not receive your ballot by 27 October, please write or call Carol Zuses, coordinator of governance, at the MLA office (646 576-5103; governance@mla.org). □

WEB SITE NEWS

2008 Convention Registration

As of early September 2008, online convention registration is open at www.mla.org for the MLA Annual Convention in San Francisco. MLA members receive priority registration as well as reduced rates. The 2008 convention Program will be accessible to both members and nonmembers through the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/convention) beginning in November. A word search of the Program will also be available. □

Argument over Information

There's no sign of a letup in books and articles deploring the declining literacy of Americans, particularly of American youth. The latest just this year is *The Dumbest Generation*, by Emory University English professor Mark Bauerlein, whose subtitle asserts that "the digital age stupefies young Americans and jeopardizes our future" and warns, "Don't trust anyone under thirty." A *Chicago Tribune* article, inspired by Bauerlein's book, reports that sixty-three percent of Americans between eighteen and twenty-four can't find Iraq on a map (Anderson). And last year, in a National Endowment for the Arts report entitled *To Read or Not to Read*, NEA Director Dana Gioia found a steep falling off in reading by schoolchildren.

I've always been skeptical of this decline scenario. It's not that I fail to see a problem (I did title a book "Clueless in Academe"), but in comparing our time unfavorably with a better past we ignore the fact that many of the same complaints were made in that supposedly better past.¹ Here is the MLA president Charles Hall Grandgent decrying rampant student ignorance in his convention address of 1912:

You are all aware of how dangerous it is to assume, on the part of our college classes, any definite knowledge of any subject. Last year I had occasion to question a good many students about . . . Charlemagne; and one after another unblushingly assigned him to the eighteenth century. A colleague in a "fresh water" college could find no one in his class who knew what event is celebrated on the fourth of July. (1)

Grandgent was so pessimistic about the student body—and he presumably taught the cream of the crop at Harvard—that he titled his jeremiad "The Dark Ages."²

The most serious problem with the decline scenario, however, is not that it idealizes the literacy of the past—or even that it tends to reduce literacy to lists of books and isolated facts like Charlemagne's dates, though that's a problem too. The most serious problem is the failure to consider the *reasons* we fail to learn information or read books, reasons that have to do with the contexts and investments that make knowledge stick in our heads.

My view is that knowledge doesn't stay with us unless it makes sense to us, and to make sense it helps greatly if it's tied to *debates* that we can see a stake in. Had there been a real debate in the media on Iraq, for example, more Americans not only would be able to locate that country on a map but also would have known early on that it had no WMDs and played no role in the 9/11 attacks.

I have just echoed an argument made by my former colleague, the late Christopher Lasch, in a 1990 essay on modern journalism entitled "The Lost Art of Political Argument." Like

Bauerlein, Lasch sought to explain the paradox that increased access to information has failed to produce more informed citizens. Lasch argued more constructively, however, by suggesting that unless information is tied to issues we care about, we retain it only superficially or not at all. The more information we are exposed to, the harder it is to make sense of it all or to decide which of it is worth learning. For Lasch it is public debate that gives information cognitive traction:

Let us begin with a simple proposition. What democracy requires is public debate, not information. Of course it needs information too, but the kind of information it needs can be generated only by vigorous popular debate. We do not know what we need to know until we ask the right questions, and we can identify the right questions only by subjecting our own ideas about the world to the test of public controversy. Information, usually seen as the precondition of debate, is better understood as its by-product. When we get into arguments that focus and fully engage our attention, we become avid seekers of relevant information. Otherwise we take in information passively—if we take it in at all. (17)

In short, we comprehend and retain information when it is relevant to arguments "that focus and fully engage our attention." When no such arguments are at hand, we drown in the information overload of the media and now the Internet.³

Lasch goes on:

From these considerations it follows that the job of the press is to encourage debate, not to supply the public with information. But as things now stand, the press generates information in abundance, and nobody pays any attention. It is no secret that the public knows less about public affairs than it used to know. Millions of Americans cannot begin to tell you what is in the Bill of Rights, what Congress does, what the Constitution says about the powers of the presidency, how the party system emerged or how it operates. Ignorance of public affairs is commonly attributed to the failure of the public schools, and only secondarily to the failure of the press to inform. But since the public no longer participates in debates on national issues, it has no reason to be better informed. When debate becomes a lost art, information makes no impression. (17)

For Lasch, then, today's literacy crisis is symptomatic of a deeper problem, the absence of the kind of democratic public debate that motivates us to learn information.

From Lasch's perspective, our tendency to define literacy in terms of decontextualized information—as seen particularly in the testing culture of today's schools—reflects the trivialization of the nineteenth-century idea of citizenship, which stressed democratic participation in public debate. This classical vision of the citizen underlay the central place accorded to rhetoric in education, where the aim was to teach not only information but how to use it to persuade one's fellow citizens. This rhetorical view of the citizen has come to seem unreal, as the center of power has shifted from the small town to the city and as the citizen has given way to the consumer. If even successful adults find it hard to picture themselves swaying the community with their argumentative eloquence, it's easy to see why young people find it all the more difficult to imagine themselves in such public roles and why they end up turning cynical. Instead of ritualistically complaining about what our students haven't learned or read,

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *MLA Newsletter*, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789.

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we should be working on reviving a public sphere of debate that would give meaning to learning and reading.

Which is where educators come in. If the press is not likely to be moved by Lasch's argument that its job "is to encourage debate, not to supply the public with information," educational institutions could jump into the breach. Lasch's observation that "we become avid seekers of relevant information" when "we get into arguments that focus and fully engage our attention" should speak to teachers and curriculum makers, especially at a time when a consensus may have emerged that students need "critical thinking skills" more than they need memorized information. With apologies for once more repeating an argument I made in *Beyond the Culture Wars* and elsewhere, organizing high school and college courses around compelling debates could make information and books more meaningful—and worth looking up—than they now often are to many students. That's my reply to those who will ask, "But how can my students debate when they don't know anything?"

Grouping courses in one discipline or more around controversial issues could give coherence and point to a curriculum that too often simply mirrors the surrounding fragmentation of information. In the humanities, as Patricia Bizzell has argued (167), a curriculum organized around arguments rather than inert chronological periods would do much to "focus and fully engage" the attention of students. Such a curriculum could take a page from "learning community" colleges, where instructors from different disciplines team-teach courses on provocative themes and problems. Pairing existing courses around common topics and reading lists, a tactic I advocated in an earlier column ("Bringing" 4), offers another way to use controversy as a means of curricular connection. Such a change may be easier to propose than to implement, but if we manage (sometimes) to argue with one another productively at academic conferences and in our books and journals, it's not clear why we couldn't find ways to do so within the curriculum.

Such curricular engagement has been made more logistically feasible by the same digital technology whose misuses Bauerlein dissects, which enables conversations across courses to take place more readily and makes it not so far-fetched to picture the curriculum as an arena of public debate. Though the Internet deepens the problem of information overload, it also, if used creatively, offers a means of overcoming the problem. If colleges fail to seize this opportunity, we may end up lagging behind the blogosphere in reviving civic debate.

Gerald Graff

NOTES

1. On the tendency to exaggerate earlier levels of school achievement, see Rothstein.

2. Grandgent's low estimate of student literacy in his day was widely shared by his contemporaries. One commentator, anticipating a famous *Doonesbury* comic strip by more than half a century, wrote in 1910 of passive college students who mechanically take down whatever the instructor says with no engagement or interest: "The instructor tries to provoke them into a semblance of life by extravagant and absurd statements, by insults, by dazzling paradoxes, by extraneous jokes. No use; they just take it down" (Slosson 520). A Penn State English professor of

this period complained of the typical student who "comes to me now and says: 'Lissun, Prof, how is this dope going to help a guy get a job and pull down a good salary? See?'" (Pattee 183). A German professor who taught at Wisconsin and Ohio State from 1910 to 1919 described looking out at "dull faces, vacant faces. . . . I look about me again and watch for one face that betrays a troubled soul, a yearning of the mind, a touch of the flame. There is none" (Lewisohn 155–56).

Further challenging idealized views of student prowess in the past, Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz's account in *Campus Life* suggests that it is only relatively recently—since World War II—that college instructors have expected that most students in their courses would do the assigned reading, much less engage with it in any serious way. The students who took their studies seriously were so marginal that they were called "outsiders." Perhaps the most telling observation on college's lack of intellectual impact on most undergraduates was made by Robert Maynard Hutchins, who wrote in 1936 that the average liberal arts degree "seems to certify that the student has passed an uneventful period without violating any local, state, or federal law, and that he has a fair, if temporary, recollection of what his teachers have said to him" (90).

3. Another writer who argues that we need mental "schemata" to organize and retain information is E. D. Hirsch, whose excellent discussion of cognitive research on schemata in chapter 2 of *Cultural Literacy* (33–69) has been overshadowed by his better-known emphasis on background information. My impression from hearsay about the Hirsch-inspired Core Knowledge K–8 Schools and a look at their Web site (<http://www.coreknowledge.org/CK/schools/index.htm>) is that they often organize information around provocative issues and themes, much the way many progressive schools do.

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Back-to-School Special

For most MLA members, fall signifies a return to the classroom, as instructors, students, or both. For MLA members who have retired from teaching, September can still evoke memories of the rituals of return. My late summer and early fall days from the end of the 1970s until 2002 were governed by the same rhythm: preparing syllabi, placing materials on reserve, and changing from beachwear to teachwear. Despite the usual presemester anxiety dreams—showing up in the wrong building for the first day of class and realizing that the subject of the course was Hindi, when my language was Spanish—the start of the academic year felt special to me. Sometimes I miss my former role, because teaching held a particular kind of joy that can be derived from no other source. Teaching also let me sense the immediate and direct impact that my work had on young lives. As my colleagues from the University at Buffalo prepare to begin their fall 2008 semester, I find myself thinking about the issues that would be on my mind if I were one of them.

My students at Buffalo would arrive for their first class with much on their minds, too. Most of them work to help pay for their education, and quite often their academic schedules revolve around their working hours. In these hard economic times, many students must forgo their college studies completely because they need to support themselves. The recent trend at elite and wealthy institutions is to give students who have financial need outright grants rather than loans, and that effort certainly has eased the burden for some families. Students at public universities like the one at which I taught rarely receive sufficient aid, however, and they often must devote more hours to their paying job than to their studies. That's a fact of life I faced with my students, and it changed the way I organized my courses. When state economies suffer, so, too, does the funding allocated to university systems. Poorer families, poorer institutions: a recipe for the educational experience to suffer.

Another question that would be on my mind as a faculty member—and it is a question students and their parents should ask as well—is, Who is doing the teaching at this institution? That is, what percentage of the instructional staff is full-time? What percentage is made up of adjuncts? What benefits and job security do contingent faculty members receive? I probably wouldn't have thought to ask that last question in the early years of my academic career, even though I spent four years as a teaching assistant and six years in part-time or temporary positions before getting a tenure-track job. Now that I am familiar with the national data on the academic workforce and can see the dramatic changes for the worse over the past several decades, I would want to know the answer to "Who is doing the teaching?" so that I could participate in advocating for local change. The MLA's office of research has compiled recent statistics on the composition of the academic workforce, and a report will be released later this fall. The MLA supports the American Federation of Teacher's Faculty and College Excellence campaign (<http://www.aftface.org/>) and collaborates with other scholarly associations in the Coalition on the Academic Workforce (<http://www.academicworkforce.org>) to bring about awareness of staffing issues and to encourage institutions to change. When the balance between full-time and part-time faculty members is suboptimal, the entire teaching force feels the negative effect—as do the students.

As a language professor, I would be asking myself, around this time of year, what my students were thinking, or hoping, when

they decided to pursue Spanish as a field of study. They would be in the majority, since approximately half the enrollments in college language classes are in Spanish (see http://www.mla.org/2006_flenrollmentsurvey). At the high school level, students overwhelmingly take Spanish rather than other languages; in some cases, Spanish is the only language offered. Heritage learners also choose to study Spanish at the college level. I would know that some of my students have specific career ideas that exact high-level language skills, whereas others have no specific job in mind but simply want to improve their spoken Spanish or learn more about the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. In classes studying the language, I would be wondering how I could meet all my students' diverse needs. In my literature courses, I would worry about how to inspire those who think they have little use for textual studies. Over the years my students were becoming increasingly focused on developing the skills they needed for employment opportunities. If I were going back in the classroom this semester, I would formulate in much more explicit terms what students should expect to get out of my classes. And I don't mean only the specific content; I mean also the skills they would learn or refine, such as close reading of a key literary work at least one hundred pages long.

Many faculty members will find themselves in an advisory role with their students, especially at the beginning of the academic year, when students consult them about course selection, major or minor requirements, internships, study abroad, and so forth. I remember meeting with first-year students who didn't know what to expect in class or on campus. I would often give two pieces of advice when prompted: attend all your classes (with rare exceptions for illness or other emergencies) and stop by during your professors' office hours when you have questions or concerns. I know that if I were returning to campus this year, I would be thinking about something else, too, and it has been on my mind since my first year at college, when I witnessed the spectacles of keg parties, frat welcome events, and the like: the effect of alcohol consumption by young people who are often living away from their families for the first time. How many of you, I wonder, have heard the same stories I used to hear, year after year, about the (sometimes devastating) ill effects of a "few too many" on young lives? On several occasions distressed young women confided in me: they went to a party, they drank too much, they don't remember much after that . . . well, you know the rest, as did I before they concluded. I informed them of the resources available on campus and tried to assure them that they'd get through it. Educating first-year students about the risks they face in a new social environment seems as important to me as ever (and that work lies beyond what language and literature professors are trained to do).

Here's what else I might be thinking about at the start of this semester. In the years immediately preceding my move to the MLA, I learned how to create Web sites for my courses, I encouraged students to contact me by e-mail about matters pertaining to the substance of the course, I placed material on electronic reserve, and I taught students how to evaluate Internet sources when they did research (the new edition of the *MLA Handbook*, to be released in April, will be of great assistance on that topic). What I didn't allow was the use of laptops in class. Truth be told, few of my students had laptops in the late 1990s, but when those who brought them to class cranked them open,

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I asked that they close them. Even though I realized that computers afforded the benefits of swift note-taking, I mentally placed them in the same category as Styrofoam containers with a taco lunch: noisy and distracting (to the student in possession and to the rest of the class). I'm not so sure I would prohibit the use of laptops today, unless it became apparent that everyone was surfing the net and bypassing my class Web site. When I taught in technology-equipped classrooms, the students could all view the Web site, but I was the driver for the most part. What if students can benefit from being connected to the Web in class? It's something I'd want to explore as I led my students toward discovering multiple avenues to advanced literacy.

I offer one final hypothetical preoccupation for my imaginary return to the classroom. If I were preparing syllabi for my undergraduate and graduate classes, I'd wonder what the connection was to the rest of the curriculum of which my courses form a part. For many of you, that query may seem beside the point, because you already sit with your colleagues regularly to discuss the goals and content of first- and second-year courses, the structure of the minor and major, the expected learning outcomes, the approach to course offerings (historical, topical, comparative, and so on). If you do, then you might be surprised to learn that at many institutions faculty members in departments of English and languages other than English have no such conversations. Sometimes course offerings follow the logic of "What advanced course do you want to teach this semester?" I'm not claiming that this method doesn't produce good results or that students don't receive excellent instruction. I am saying that more thoughtful discussions about what we want students to experience in our courses and major programs would steer us away from the notion that somehow we are independent contractors at our institutions. Ironically, those of us who most rightfully could call themselves independent contractors—the adjunct instructors—often have the least flexibility when it comes to selecting what courses to teach, what books to assign, and even what days the class meets. I've always enjoyed the curriculum committees on which I've sat, and I've learned a lot from my colleagues over the years. Today more than ever I'd ask, How does this course I'm teaching fit in with what my colleagues are teaching? and How can we collaborate more closely as coauthors of the curriculum?

In my professorial days, I used lots of resources from the MLA and recommended still more to my students. Now that I am on the production side of what the MLA does, I see the great care that goes into the *MLA International Bibliography*, the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, the *Approaches to Teaching World Literature* series, and other key publications. In collaboration with MLA members who serve on committees and task forces, I and my colleagues in the office of programs and the office of research work to produce reports that help the profession understand trends and issues in employment, staffing, enrollments, graduation rates, tenure, and other professional matters. My perspective on the profession has evolved significantly since I took on this work at the MLA. I hope that the books, journals, and reports that we publish in print and on the Web are useful to all of you who are returning to your classrooms, and I always welcome your suggestions for making what we do more relevant to your lives. I've always considered teaching to be a great privilege—perhaps even more so now that it is not mine to do.

Rosemary G. Feal

GOVERNANCE

Request for Comments on Delegate Assembly Resolutions

At its meeting on 29 December 2007 in Chicago, the Delegate Assembly approved the following resolutions, which are subject to ratification by the MLA membership. MLA members are asked to comment on the resolutions before the ratification vote is conducted.

The resolution comment process will be conducted in the members-only area of the Web site (<http://www.mla.org>). The text of the resolutions will be posted at the Web site on 1 October, and members may enter signed comments at the Web site from 1 to 31 October. Members who wish to comment but who do not have Web access may forward comments to Carol Zuses for posting at the Web site. The Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee, which proposed the use of the Web site for the comment process, encourages members to be brief, to limit comments to the issues addressed in the resolutions, and to observe common rules of Internet etiquette. Members' comments will not be subject to a word limit, nor will there be a limit on the number of comments that an individual may post.

During the balloting period, from 1 November through 10 December, additional comments will not be accepted but comments already posted will remain available for review. Members who do not have Web access may request hard copies of the posted comments from Carol Zuses.

To enter the members-only area of the Web site, you will need to log in with your current member number or user name and your password. If you do not remember your current log-in information, you can retrieve it by visiting www.mla.org and selecting Change Your User Name and Password or by contacting the MLA membership department (646 576-5151; membership@mla.org).

The resolutions that are subject to ratification are printed below. Members may reach Carol Zuses by mail (MLA, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789), e-mail (governance@mla.org), and fax (646 576-5107).

Resolution 2007-1

Whereas the 2007 AAUP "Freedom in the Classroom" report identifies dire challenges to academic freedom, and

Whereas contingent faculty members are most vulnerable to nonreappointment for exercising their academic freedom, and

Whereas reliance on contingent faculty members has grown significantly, such that up to 78% of faculty members in state college systems are part-time,

Be it resolved that the MLA publicly support state legislation aimed at ensuring fair pay and job security with full due-process protections for contingent faculty members and at establishing a higher proportion of full-time faculty members, as developed, in part, by the AFT-led campaign for Faculty and College Excellence (FACE).

Resolution 2007-2

Whereas the MLA recognizes that the Middle East is a subject of intense debate, and

Whereas it is essential that colleges and universities protect the rights of faculty members to speak forthrightly on all sides of this issue,

Be it resolved that, while people outside the university have the right to express their views, universities must resist the inclusion of unsolicited outside opinion in faculty appointment or promotion reviews, and

Be it resolved that the MLA defend the academic freedom and the freedom of speech of faculty members and invited speakers to ad-

dress the issue of the Middle East in the manner they choose.

Resolution 2007-3

Whereas upon criticism of Professor Ward Churchill for his remarks concerning the 9/11 attacks, the University of Colorado initiated proceedings against him, and

Whereas such acts of retribution threaten free expression in the university setting, particularly against those in historically marginalized disciplines,

Be it resolved that the MLA condemns the University of Colorado investigation and all such politically motivated investigations into the speech and scholarship of faculty members throughout the world. □

GOVERNANCE

Nominations for 2009 Division Executive Committee Elections

One new member is elected annually to each division executive committee. The elections are held in the fall, when the other major association elections (for second vice president, Executive Council, and Delegate Assembly) take place. Division executive committees arrange the contests in accordance with the "Policies for Divisions, Discussion Groups, and Allied and Affiliate Organizations" (Sept. 2008 *PMLA* 895-99; www.mla.org). Because the policies require that an executive committee choose one nominee from among the MLA members "suggested by the division membership at large," executive committee members strongly encourage such suggestions.

To suggest someone for nomination in 2009, use the designated space at the bottom of this year's MLA election ballot or send a letter of nomination to the coordinator of governance at the MLA office. Please provide the person's name and affiliation and indicate the appropriate division. All suggestions received by 10 December 2008 (the deadline for receipt of election ballots) will be considered by the division executive committees during their meetings at the 2008 annual convention. Nominees selected by the executive committees will be invited in the spring of 2009 to accept the nomination. Anyone proposed by ten division members must be included by the executive committee on the slate of candidates (provided the person agrees to stand for election). □

CONVENTION

MLA to Meet in San Francisco for Its 124th Annual Convention

The MLA Annual Convention returns this year to San Francisco, a city renowned for its beauty, cuisine, cultural attractions, neighborhoods, and universities. Among the city's many museums is the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, which will have two ongoing exhibitions (*Matisse and Beyond: The Painting and Sculpture Collection* and *Picturing Modernity: The Photography Collection*) and a special showcase (246 and Counting: Recent Architecture and Design Acquisitions) on display during the MLA convention. San Francisco is also home to outstanding theater, opera, symphony, and ballet companies and often features premieres of Broadway-bound plays. Two major airports, San Francisco International and Oakland International, serve the Bay Area, and buses, cable cars, taxis, and the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system make it easy to get into and around the city. Members can choose from a variety of hotels, all offering rooms at substantial discounts for the convention.

This is the first MLA convention to be held in San Francisco since 1998, so come and join friends and colleagues in returning to this wonderful city.

Transportation to and in San Francisco

MLA convention hotels are located in downtown San Francisco.

By plane: San Francisco is served by San Francisco International Airport (www.flysfo.com) and Oakland International Airport (www.oaklandairport.com).

San Francisco International Airport (SFO): Cab fares from SFO to the various convention hotels range from \$30 to \$44. Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), the train between SFO and downtown, costs \$5.15. For more information, visit www.bart.gov. Super Shuttle provides van service between SFO and all downtown hotels. Tickets cost \$10 to \$15 one-way. For more information and reservations, visit www.supershuttle.com or call 800 258-3826. Check with your hotel concierge for hotel departure times.

Oakland: Taxi service from Oakland International Airport to downtown San Francisco costs approximately \$55. BART, the train between the airport and downtown San Francisco, takes approximately thirty minutes and costs \$5.30. For more information, visit www.bart.gov. Super Shuttle offers van service to downtown hotels. Tickets cost between \$25 and \$35 one-way. For more information and reservations, visit www.supershuttle.com or call 800 258-3826.

Air Travel

Arrangements for air travel may be made through the MLA Web site, through airline Web sites, by phone directly with the airlines, or through Association Travel Concepts (ATC), the official travel coordinator for the MLA Annual Convention.

ATC will search for the lowest available fare on any airline and will send electronic ticket receipts and itineraries for your airline tickets to your e-mail address if you book through the Web site or to your e-mail address or by regular mail if you book over the phone. There is a service fee of \$29 per airline ticket for telephone reservations and of \$10 per airline ticket for reservations made through the MLA Web site (where housing reservations can also be made, without charge). ATC can be reached at 800 458-9383 Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Eastern time. Reservations can be made on the MLA Web site at any time.

The following discounts are available to convention participants:

- Up to 15% off applicable classes of service on Continental for tickets purchased more than 30 days before the MLA Annual Convention. Restrictions apply. (www.continental.com; 800 468-7022; meeting ID: ZE8TAFDB12)
- 5% off the available fare in applicable classes of service for tickets on American Airlines purchased before the MLA Annual Convention. (www.aa.com; 800 433-1790; meeting ID: A15D8AD)
- Although convention participants do not receive a discount on United Airlines, the MLA will receive credit toward free tickets for association committee meetings if you use code 510CK when you reserve on United (www.united.com; 800 521-4041; meeting ID: 510CK) □

CONVENTION

Child Care Arrangements

KiddieCorp will provide child care during the annual convention in San Francisco. The KiddieCorp staff's professional child care specialists have designed a program for convention groups that includes age-appropriate crafts projects, toys, games, and entertainment. KiddieCorp stresses carefully selected staff; sturdy, safe equipment; and close supervision of play and rest.

Parents are urged to preregister by Friday, 5 December, since only a limited number of on-site registrations may be available, depending on space, insurance, and staffing. To secure a reservation, you can download a copy of the form from the MLA Web site (www.mla.org). You can also write the convention office (convention@mla.org) and request a registration form. Please return the completed form to the convention office by Friday, 5 December, along with the registration fee: \$45 a day for the first child and \$15 a day for each additional child; for graduate students, \$25 a day for the first child and \$15 a day for each additional child. The preregistration process will ensure the appropriate child-to-caregiver ratio. The registration fee may be paid by credit card or by check made payable to the Modern Language Association of America.

KiddieCorp has the right to refuse child care to children who are seriously ill and to refuse on-site child care registrations if accepting additional children would adversely affect the quality of child care. A morning snack and an afternoon snack will be provided. Lunch will also be provided for children who are in child care at lunchtime. Parents must indicate on the registration form whether their children will need lunch, so that the staff can order the appropriate amount of food. Parents should inform the staff of any special dietary needs. □

CONVENTION

Accommodations and Services for Persons with Disabilities

The MLA is committed to making arrangements that allow all members of the association to participate in the convention. Karin Bagnall in the MLA convention office handles arrangements for persons with disabilities (kbagnall@mla.org). Meeting rooms in the headquarters hotels are accessible by elevator, and the doors are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs. There will be desks in the convention registration and information areas at the Hilton San Francisco (East lounge, Ballroom level), the San Francisco Marriott (north and south registration area, lower B2 level), and the Fairmont San Francisco (outside the Garden Room, Lobby level), staffed by personnel who can provide assistance to convention attendees with disabilities. To reserve hotel rooms that are specifically equipped for persons with permanent or temporary disabilities, write or call Karin Bagnall by 14 November 2008. The convention housing form also includes a space for attendees to request particular equipment or accommodations.

Shuttle Bus. A complimentary transportation service for persons with disabilities will be available throughout convention meeting hours to transport attendees with disabilities. Arrangements should be made at the desk for persons with disabilities in the Hilton San Francisco (East lounge, Ballroom level), the San Francisco Marriott (north and south registration areas, lower B2 level), and the Fairmont San Francisco (outside the Garden Room, Lobby level) as well as at the satellite desks located in the lobbies of the Hilton San Francisco, the San Francisco Marriott, and the Fairmont San Francisco. Further details and phone numbers will be posted in the headquarters hotel lobbies.

Sessions. Speakers are asked to bring five copies of their papers, even draft copies, for the use of members who wish to follow the written text. Speakers who use handouts should prepare some copies in a large-print format (fourteen- to sixteen-point). Speakers should indicate whether they want their papers and handouts returned. Sign language interpreters are available on request. To arrange for an interpreter, write or call Karin Bagnall by 14 November.

Please report any problems on-site to the MLA staff members in the headquarters offices at the Hilton San Francisco (Union Square 25, 4th floor, Building 2) or the San Francisco Marriott (Pacific Suite G, 4th floor), and they will do their best to assist you. Hotel staff members may not be able to respond. □

CONVENTION

Travel Assistance for Advanced Graduate Students

The Executive Council has voted to allot funds to provide partial travel reimbursements of \$300 to advanced graduate students who are members of the MLA by 30 June 2008 and who will travel to the 2008 convention in order to attend preconvention workshops, sessions in their areas of scholarly interest, meetings with job counselors, or interviews. The council is particularly concerned with helping students who have no support for convention attendance from their institutions or other sources and who incur substantial costs for travel to and from the convention. Funds are available to cover awards for up to 200 students; if more apply, recipients will be selected in a random manner.

Members may apply for assistance online at the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/resources/awards/award_finasst/conv_travel_assist) or by mail. Letters of application must reach the MLA by 1 November 2008, by mail to the MLA Travel Assistance Program, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789, or by fax to 646 835-4067. Fax transmissions may be used to meet the deadline, but they must be followed by signed letters. (Applications by e-mail will not be accepted.) Each letter should include a brief statement by the student stipulating that he or she has no external support for travel to the convention and be accompanied by a statement on university letterhead signed by the student's dissertation director or department chair confirming that the student is enrolled in a doctoral program at the signer's institution and has met all the requirements for the PhD except the dissertation.

Since 1997, the Executive Council has invited MLA members to donate money to a professional education assistance fund that will provide ongoing support for these travel reimbursements. A space on the membership renewal form allows members to indicate that they have added to their dues payments a tax-deductible contribution to the fund; contributions may also be made on the MLA Web site. Advanced graduate students who have paid dues for the 2009 calendar year will be eligible to apply for travel reimbursements in 2009. □

CONVENTION**Travel Assistance for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Members and for the Unemployed**

The MLA is offering \$300 travel grants to non-tenure-track faculty members and those without employment to attend the 2008 convention in San Francisco. To qualify for a grant, applicants must have been members of the MLA in 2007 and must be nonstudent members of the MLA for 2008. They must teach less than full time, be non-tenure-track faculty members, or be unemployed. Their income must place them in one of the three lowest income ranges in the dues schedule. As part of the application process, members must request matching funds from their departments or institutions using a letter provided by the MLA (available for downloading at www.mla.org/assist_nontenure). The Executive Council wants to make institutions aware of the importance of supporting all instructional staff members in their professional development activities. The institution's response to the MLA letter must be submitted, even if no matching funds are granted. The response should be presented when grant recipients pick up their checks at the convention. Members may apply for assistance online at the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/resources/awards/award_finasst/assist_nontenure) or by mail. To apply by mail, members should send their contact information, along with a brief statement stipulating that they are part-time or non-tenure-track faculty members or are unemployed, to MLA headquarters by 1 November 2008. Applications should be addressed to Travel Assistance Program, MLA, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789. Fax transmissions to 646 835-4067 may be used to meet the deadline, but they must be followed by signed applications. Applications by e-mail will not be accepted. For additional information or details on how to apply, please contact Annie Reiser (646 576-5141; areiser@mla.org). □

CONVENTION**Travel Assistance for Regular and Life Members Residing outside the United States and Canada**

The Executive Council has voted to allot funds from the Good Neighbor Fund to provide partial travel reimbursement of \$300 to regular and life members residing outside the United States and Canada who are attending the 2008 convention in San Francisco. To be eligible, applicants must have been members of the MLA in 2007 and must be nonstudent members of the MLA in 2008. Funds are available to cover up to 150 awards; if more members apply, priority will be given to applicants who are in the lowest dues categories or who do not receive travel funds from their institutions. If necessary, recipients will be selected in a random manner. Eligible applicants not selected in 2008 will be given priority in 2009, provided that they apply and still meet the eligibility requirements. No one may receive this grant more than once every three years.

Members may apply for assistance online at the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/resources/awards/award_finasst/assist_reglifemembers) or by mail. To apply by mail, members should send their contact information along with a brief statement stipulating whether they are receiving travel funds from their institutions. Applications must reach the MLA by 1 November 2008, by mail to the MLA Travel Assistance Program, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789, or by fax to 646 835-4067. Fax transmissions may be used to meet the deadline, but they must be followed by signed applications. Applications by e-mail will not be accepted. □

CONVENTION**2008 Convention Invitation**

The invitation to the 2008 MLA Annual Convention in San Francisco was mailed to members in early September; it includes complete information about convention hotels, travel arrangements, and preregistering at member rates. A priority mailing of the convention pre-registration packet was sent in mid-August to chairs whose departments were members of ADE or ADFL by 30 June 2008. Once the mailing has gone out to the entire membership in September, suites will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Members can register for the convention and make hotel and airline arrangements through the MLA's Web site (www.mla.org) in early September. □

CONVENTION**Program Available for Members with Visual Impairments**

Members with visual impairments who would like to receive a copy of the November 2008 (Program) issue of *PMLA* in a usable format should write or call June Hicks in the executive director's office (646 576-5102; jhicks@mla.org). □

CONVENTION**Meeting Times for Allied Organizations**

For allied organizations sponsoring two meetings, one meeting will take place on 27 December in the 3:30 p.m. or the 5:15 p.m. time slot. Please keep this in mind when making travel arrangements. □

Using the MLA Job Information Center

The Job Information Center will be located in the Fairmont San Francisco (Terrace Room). The center includes a sign-in and interview information area, an interview area, and a message center.

All candidates, departmental representatives, and interviewers who wish to use the facilities of the Job Information Center must be registered for the convention.

The center, which is designed to assist job candidates and interviewers in both English and foreign languages, will provide the following services:

1. Sign-In Desk. The MLA will maintain a database of information about the location of interviews that departments have scheduled. Departmental representatives who plan to hold job interviews during the convention, whether in their hotel rooms or in the interview area of the Job Information Center, should sign in so that candidates with whom they have set up interviews will be able to locate them. Although an interviewer's name may appear in "Who's Where," for security reasons hotel switchboards will not give out guests' room numbers—and are in any case extremely busy. A brief stop at the sign-in desk by a thoughtful interviewer can save much confusion and worry for candidates.

The sign-in desk will be open on 27 December from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., on 28 December from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., on 29 December from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and on 30 December from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Interviewers should give, and candidates should ask for, as many specifics as possible at the time when an interview is being arranged. Candidates should be informed

- whether the interview will take place in the interview area or in a hotel room
- what hotel the room will be in
- what name the room will be registered under
- the day, date, and hour when the interview will take place

Interviewers need to remember that a hotel switchboard will be able to connect candidates with them only if the person the candidate asks to be connected with is the person in whose name the hotel room is registered. Candidates may be unable to locate an interviewer if told no more than, for instance, "We'll be in the Hyatt."

The interview committee should let candidates know whether it will be checking in with the Job Information Center or whether candidates should call the switchboard of the committee's hotel to find out its room number. Unless a committee checks in with the Job Information Center, the center will not know where it is interviewing.

The center opens at 12:00 noon on 27 December to provide candidates information on interview locations; it will not be able to give location information to candidates for any interviews scheduled before that time.

2. Interview Area. For the convenience of departmental representatives and candidates, the Job Information Center includes an interview area for both English and foreign languages. Departments that wish to use the interview area should schedule interviews with candidates before the convention whenever possible. Interviews may be scheduled

on-site by leaving messages at the message center, although departments should be aware that communication during the convention can be difficult. Tables in the interview area will be assigned to departmental representatives on a first-come, first-served basis. The hours for the interview area are from 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m. on 27 December, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on 28 December, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on 29 December, and from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on 30 December. Interview committees using the interview area should not arrange interviews outside the scheduled hours. Candidates who know that their interviews will take place in the interview area can go there directly to find the right table number without stopping at the interview location desk. Staff members will be on duty in the area to assist interviewers and candidates.

Interviewers and candidates who use the area must be registered for the convention and display a registration badge to enter.

3. Counseling Service. The Job Information Center counseling service affords job seekers the opportunity to discuss individual employment problems with experienced departmental administrators. While counselors cannot help candidates obtain interviews, they can offer concrete advice on such matters as the appropriate content and presentation of vitae and letters of application, the kinds of institutions to which candidates might most profitably apply, and realistic approaches to job interviews. Counselors will be on hand to speak with interested candidates during selected hours from 10:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. on 28 and 29 December. Appointments can be arranged through the staff member on duty. Each counselee should bring a sample cover letter and vita.

4. Vacancy Notices. A list of openings received too late to be included in the print version of the December *Job Information List* will be posted in the center. Detailed descriptions of any last-minute vacancies may be submitted to the MLA staff in the center for posting. On request, the MLA staff will collect vitae for departments that plan to conduct interviews at the convention for such positions.

5. Message Center. Open from 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m. on 27 December, from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on 28 December, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on 29 December, and from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on 30 December, the message center will help candidates and interviewers who have corresponded before the convention arrange specific interview times and places. The message center will not be useful to those who leave messages at random for persons with whom they have had no earlier contact and who may not even be at the convention. Such messages are rarely picked up.

While every effort will be made to assist participants at the Job Information Center, it should be stressed that the MLA does not have the facilities to introduce candidates and interviewers who have not corresponded before the convention. Job candidates who do not have prearranged interviews should not attend for the sole purpose of seeking employment.

Before attending the convention, candidates and interviewers should review the guidelines for job seekers and hiring departments in the *JIL* section of the MLA's Web site. □

Updated MLA Recommendations on Salaries for Entry-Level, Full-Time, and Part-Time Faculty Members

At its 19–20 April 2007 meeting the MLA Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities updated MLA salary recommendations, as charged by the Executive Council. The minimum salary range for full-time appointments at the entry level should be at least \$42,600 to \$46,400 or better for instructors and \$54,000 to \$58,300 or better for beginning assistant professors. Health care benefits and shared contributions to a portable retirement plan should also be provided.

Part-time faculty members perform a valuable role in institutions, giving employers flexibility in scheduling and providing a high level of expertise without a substantial long-term commitment from the institution. These faculty members should be compensated not only for their expertise but also for the flexibility and convenience they offer. The Modern Language Association therefore recommends a salary range of \$6,400 to \$9,200 per course section, with fringe benefits and cost-of-living increases, as reasonable minimum compensation for part-time faculty members. □

CONVENTION

ADE- and ADFL-Sponsored Sessions for Job Candidates and Interviewers

ADE and ADFL will sponsor several sessions at the MLA convention to help job candidates and interviewers with interview protocols and job search procedures. ADE and ADFL also provide an individual job counseling service in the interview area of the Job Information Center. Department chairs will offer their experience and expertise in 25-minute one-on-one counseling sessions on 28 and 29 December. Job candidates who take advantage of the counseling service should bring a copy of an application letter and CV.

ADE-sponsored convention sessions for job candidates. “A Preconvention Workshop for Job Seekers: The Job Search in English” will provide job candidates an opportunity to hear experienced department chairs from three types of institutions describe how their departments approach interviewing and reaching decisions about who should receive the offer of a faculty position. Speaking are Bonne Tymorski August (New York City Coll. of Tech., City Univ. of New York), Donna Akiba Sullivan Harper (Spelman Coll.), Lawrence H. Schwartz (Montclair State Univ.), and John P. Zomchick (Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville). “Career Opportunities in Two-Year Colleges” will provide information about the needs of and job opportunities at two-year colleges. Speaking are Thomas Blair (City Coll. of San Francisco, CA), Rob Jenkins (Georgia Perimeter Coll., Clarkston), and Robert Kelly (Macon State Coll.). At “The Job I Got: A Roundtable on the Transition from Graduate Student to Faculty Member,” speakers include Sheryl Cavales Doolan (Santa Rosa Junior Coll., CA), Sarah J. Heidt (Kenyon Coll.), Anna Karen Nardo (Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge), and Stephen B. Sutherland (Univ. of Massachusetts, Boston).

ADFL-sponsored convention sessions for job candidates. “A Preconvention Workshop for Job Seekers: The Job Search in Foreign Languages” will offer job candidates and interviewers opportunities to participate in a roundtable discussion of interviewing and hiring practices led by experienced department chairs who serve on the ADFL Executive Committee. Participating will be Barbara K. Altmann (Univ. of Oregon), Nelly Furman (MLA), Christina Kramer (Univ. of Toronto), Cornelius Kubler (Williams Coll.), and Annette Kym (Hunter Coll., City Univ. of New York). In a second session, “Demonstration Interviews for Job Seekers,” recently successful candidates will be publicly interviewed by department chairs; discussion will focus on what went right and wrong, what the interviewers were expecting or looking for, and how the interviewee might improve his or her performance. Participating will be Randolph D. Pope (Univ. of Virginia) and Dominique van Hooff (San José State Univ.).

ADE and ADFL jointly sponsor “A Preconvention Workshop for Members of Search Committees,” which will give members of departmental search committees an opportunity to discuss the hiring process, including writing advertisements, reading vitae and dossiers, interviewing at the MLA convention and on campus, and negotiating job offers. Discussion leaders will be Thomas Blair (City Coll. of San Francisco), Robert Crossley (Univ. of Massachusetts, Boston), and Mary Wildner-Bassett (Univ. of Arizona). □

BOOK NEWS

Forthcoming New Edition of *MLA Handbook*

Set for spring 2009 publication, the seventh edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* will contain simplified guidelines for citing works published on the Web. Users of the seventh edition will also have access to a Web site containing the full text of the print volume as well as sample research papers. Look for more information about the new edition of the *MLA Handbook* in the Winter issue of the *MLA Newsletter*. □

Implementation of Revised MLA Documentation Style

The third edition of the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, released in spring 2008, presents a significant revision of MLA documentation style. MLA publications will begin to follow the revised guidelines in January 2009, so manuscripts that are likely to be published in 2009 or thereafter should be prepared using the third edition of the *MLA Style Manual*. For the remainder of 2008, MLA publications will continue to use the documentation style described in the sixth edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Undergraduate and high school students should continue to use the style outlined in the sixth edition of the *MLA Handbook* until spring 2009, when the seventh edition of the *MLA Handbook* is released. Additional information about the revisions is available on the MLA Web site (<http://www.mla.org/style>). □

CONVENTION

Calls for Papers for 2009 Convention in Philadelphia

The 2009 convention will be held in Philadelphia. Members should familiarize themselves with the guidelines for the MLA convention, which appear on the MLA Web site (www.mla.org) and in the September 2008 *PMLA* (pp. 889–94), before writing to the organizers listed below. If not provided, organizers' addresses are available on the MLA Web site to MLA members and listed in the September 2008 *PMLA*. All participants in convention sessions must be MLA members by 7 April 2009. Organizers are responsible for responding to all inquiries. A member may participate as speaker or respondent only twice (e.g., by organizing and chairing a meeting, reading a paper, or serving as a speaker, panelist, or respondent in one or two sessions) at a single convention.

Calls for papers are limited to thirty-five words, including the session title but not the name or address of the organizer.

Groups that announce two or more calls for papers with the same contact person list the contact person only once.

Divisions

Interdisciplinary Approaches

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Romance and Young-Adult Literature. Romance narratives for teens. Possible topics: history and development of young-adult romance, gender and sexuality issues, comparisons with adult genre romance, etc. 250-word abstracts by 1 Mar.; Catherine Tosenberger (ctosen@gmail.com).

Screening Childhood. Reconsidering our understanding of children's literature adapted for film or television. Theorized approaches to book-film "pairs" particularly welcome. 1-page abstracts by 1 Mar.; Erica Hateley (ehateley@ksu.edu).

Spirituality in Children's and Young-Adult Literature. Religion and spirituality in children's and young-adult literatures, representing major world religions, spirituality of aboriginal and First World peoples, or neopaganism. 500-word abstracts by 1 Mar.; Keith Dorwick (kdorwick@yahoo.com) and Jameela Lares (Jameela.Lares@usm.edu).

Special Sessions

These proposed topics for special sessions at the convention have not been approved; the announcements are intended to bring potential organizers

and panelists together before organizers send in their final proposals. Organizers and panelists should note the 7 April deadline for membership and the 1 April deadline for submission of final proposals.

Rebecca Harding Davis: Beyond. On any aspect of Davis's writings after "Life"; new cultural or literary contexts especially welcome. 1-page proposals by 10 Mar.; Sharon M. Harris (sharon.harris@uconn.edu).

Dogs in Art and Literature in Early Modern Europe. Any aspect of dogs in the visual culture and written text of early modern Europe. 250-word abstracts by 1 Mar.; Mirzam Handal (mhandal@tulane.edu).

East Asian Humor and Cultural Modernity. Critical or historical approaches to comic literature, film, or drama in or about East Asia, in relation to cultural modernity and the politics of humor. 500-word abstracts by 16 Mar.; Alexander C. Y. Huang (acyhuang@psu.edu).

French Crises. Contemporary crises in France's social-historical models and in its insertion within larger constructs (i.e., the EU, the global economy, international politics); "déclinisme," its artistic representations, and more. 1-page abstracts by 1 Mar.; Alain M. Gabon (agabon@vwc.edu).

In Celebration of Blackness and Value. Responses to Lindon Barrett's "Seeing Double." Address questions of sound versus sight, forms and figures of value; marginality; violence; blackness and Enlightenment thought. Abstracts of papers by 1 Mar.; Jennifer Brody (jennifer.brody@duke.edu).

New Directions in Black Autobiography. Exploring new theoretical, critical, and historical approaches to black autobiography, 1896 to the present; readings of neglected autobiographies that illuminate such new directions. 250-word abstracts and brief vitae by 1 Mar.; Anthony S. Foy (afoy1@swarthmore.edu).

Nietzsche and Contemporary Critical Practice. What is Nietzsche's role in the development and self-understanding of the history of literary theory? How can that genealogy be reassessed and reevaluated today? Abstracts by 15 Mar.; Magdalena Ostas (mostas@fau.edu).

Translating Africa in/and Global Contexts. What are the theories for reading and translating Africa in global contexts? What is their impact on global reception, teaching, and criticism in and of modern languages? 250-word abstracts by 15 Mar.; Wangui Wa Goro (wagoro@gmail.com).

Allied and Affiliate Organizations

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE ASSOCIATION

Malevolent Metafiction: Good Books Gone Bad. Metafiction in children's literature: topics include metafiction as ineffective or threatening authority figures, as enculturation, and as subversion. 1-page abstracts by 1 Mar.; Jordana Hall (chlittamuc@yahoo.com).

Deadline for Audiovisual Requests

All requests for audiovisual equipment must be made by the chair of the session by **1 April**. Requests must be received by mail or by fax by 5:00 p.m. on this date. Because the need for audiovisual equipment is a major factor in the scheduling of meetings (and because the movement of equipment is both costly and hazardous), the deadline is firm. Participants should indicate their audiovisual needs when they respond to a call for papers and should check with the chair of the session or with the MLA convention office to be sure that the necessary equipment has been ordered by 1 April.

Teenaged Monsters. Why is adolescent development represented as monstrous in horror fiction and film for young adults? Possible areas of inquiry: sexuality, gender, types of monsters, or tropes (e.g., possession, haunting). 1-page abstracts by 1 Mar.; June Pulliam (jpullia@lsu.edu).

CONFERENCE ON CHRISTIANITY AND LITERATURE

Faith and Fable in Geoffrey Hill's Poetry. A roundtable addressing the interactions among religious belief, religious doubt, and the imagination in the poetry of Geoffrey Hill. 250-word abstracts by 15 Mar.; Emily Merriam (estm@sfsu.edu).

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE SOCIETY

Hawthorne as a Writer of Creative Nonfiction. All interpretations of the topic of Hawthorne as a writer of creative nonfiction. 250-word proposals for 20-min. papers by 1 Mar.

Sophia Peabody at Two Hundred. Her art, writing, editing, illustrations, and influence on Hawthorne's fiction. 250-word proposals for 20-min. papers by 1 Mar.; Sam Coale (samcoale@cox.net).

ERNEST HEMINGWAY FOUNDATION AND SOCIETY

Hemingway and African (American) Writers. How have African (American) authors and critics engaged with Hemingway? How can one teach Hemingway in conjunction with black writers? 150-word proposals by 1 Mar.; Suzanne del Gizzo (delgizzos@chc.edu).

MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE DRAMA SOCIETY

Cognitive Theories of Medieval Performance. Cognitive theory helps us explore medieval performance events and their reception. Work invited from all medieval periods and geographic regions. 1-page abstracts by 15 Mar.

Performing Race: Language and Difference in Early Theater. Papers on medieval and early modern theater from a variety of geographic regions or linguistic traditions. 1-page abstracts by 15 Mar.; Carolyn E. Coulson-Grigsby (ccoulson2@su.edu).

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN LITERATURE

The South and the Sublime. Any aspect of the sublime in Southern literature. Any historical period, genre, or theoretical framework. 250–500-word abstracts by 5 Mar.; Thomas Haddock (thaddock@utk.edu). □

BOOK NEWS

Call for Contributions to Approaches Series

The Publications Committee has approved development of *Approaches to Teaching Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings and Other Works*, edited by Leslie A. Donovan.

If you wish to contribute to this volume, please visit www.mla.org/approaches and follow the link indicated. □

BOOK NEWS

Three New MLA Titles Published

The MLA published three new titles in summer 2008. *Approaches to Teaching Nabokov's Lolita* was edited by Zoran Kuzmanovich and Galya Diment. Widely considered one of the twentieth century's great novels, *Lolita* maintains an established place on the syllabus—in English departments, Russian and Slavic departments, and departments of comparative literature. Yet its particular mix of narrative strategies, ornate allusive prose, and troublesome subject matter complicates its presentation to students.

This volume aims to help instructors make *Lolita* accessible to students. Part 1, "Materials," opens with an extensive chronology of the author's life, outlines the novel's convoluted publication history, and identifies useful textual and audiovisual resources for teaching *Lolita*. In part 2, "Approaches," instructors reflect on the best ways to illuminate the novel's ethical quandaries and introduce its textual intricacies. The twenty-two essays are grouped by three themes: instructors' experiences teaching *Lolita* in specific courses; the literary, generic, and cultural contexts of the novel, including its Russian roots, Romantic tropes and themes, and representation of 1950s American culture; and the theoretical approaches to the novel, which address ethics and aesthetics, the role of readers, and the connection between the author and the narrator. The volume costs \$37.50 (MLA members \$30.00) in cloth and \$19.75 (MLA members \$15.80) in paperback.

Teaching North American Environmental Literature, edited by Laird Christensen, Mark C. Long, and Fred Waage, is the twenty-second volume in the MLA Options for Teaching series. From stories about Los Angeles freeways to slave narratives to science fiction, environmental literature encompasses more than nature writing. The study of environmental narrative has flourished since the MLA published *Teaching Environmental Literature* in 1985. Today, writers have a self-consciousness about writing in the genre, teachers have incorporated field study into courses, technology has opened up classroom possibilities, and institutions have developed to support study of this vital body of writing. The challenge for instructors is to identify core texts while maintaining the field's dynamic, open qualities.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

MLA International Bibliography Fellowships

In 2003, the Executive Council approved a request by the Advisory Committee on the *MLA International Bibliography* for the creation of *MLA Bibliography* fellowships. These fellowships recognize the efforts of scholars who index materials on behalf of the *MLA International Bibliography*. Earlier this year, the fifth group of recipients for this award was announced. The 2008 recipients are

- Gerardo T. Cummings**, assistant professor, Indiana State University (Spanish literature, linguistics)
Katrin Fischer, independent scholar (German language and literature)
Natasha Himmelman, graduate student, Center for African Studies, University of Cape Town (African literature)
Brian Kennelly, associate professor and chair, California Polytechnic University (French literature)
Julia Major, MLIS graduate student, University of Washington (Renaissance literature, English literature)
Elmore Marcus, ACRL, project editor, Resources for College Libraries (children's literature, 19th-century British literature)
Colin Ramsey, associate professor, Appalachian University (early American literature)
Terese C. Ricard, instructor, Spartanburg Community College, SC (Spanish literature)
H. Elizabeth Smith, assistant professor, Bronx Community College, NY (rhetoric and composition, teaching of literature)
Robert O. Steele, graduate student, University of Maryland (French literature)

Applications for the 2009 field bibliography fellowships are due 1 April 2009. Fellowships are for a three-year period, beginning 1 July 2009 and ending 30 June 2012. The MLA seeks scholars of any level of seniority interested in training as field bibliography fellows and able to deliver at least one hundred citations each year. This opportunity is open to potential as well as existing field bibliographers. The MLA will provide materials and training meetings at the annual convention. Fellows attending training sessions will have their conference registration fees waived. On completion of their fellowships, they will receive a stipend of \$500 and a certificate at the awards ceremony during the Presidential Address at the MLA convention. It is hoped that recipients of these fellowships will continue submitting citations throughout their careers.

Applicants should be current MLA members, hold a master's or PhD degree in a relevant field, and have access to scholarly material for indexing. Please submit a letter of request, including qualifications and reasons for applying for the fellowship, and a current résumé or CV to Helen Slavin, *MLA International Bibliography*, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789 (hslavin@mla.org). □

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The essays in this volume focus on North American environmental writing, presenting teachers with background on environmental-justice issues, ecocriticism, and ecofeminism. Contributors consider the various disciplines that have shaped the field, including African American, American Indian, Canadian, and Chicana/o literature. The interdisciplinary approaches recommended treat the theme of predators in literature, ecology and ethics, conservation, and film. A focus on place-based literature explores how students can physically engage with the environment as they study literature. The volume closes with an annotated resource guide, organized by subject matter, and costs \$40.00 (MLA members \$32.00) in cloth and \$22.00 (MLA members \$17.60) in paperback.

Also recently published was *Academic Cultures: Professional Preparation and the Teaching Life*, edited by Sean P. Murphy. For better or for worse, the goal of securing tenure-track assistant professorships frames the graduate school experience for most students. Yet what the graduate experience boasts in scholarly training it lacks in institutional training—that is, in guiding future faculty members to see and experience positively the wide variety of prospective professional identities rooted in assorted academic cultures.

Academic Cultures gives voice to diversity in postsecondary education, a strength of the system rather than a problem to redress. Contributors, whether they work at a private high school or a public comprehensive university, an open-access institution or a religiously affiliated college, disclose the details and outcomes of their cross-sector transitions. Their accounts show how faculty members from a range of institutions have built rewarding professional lives based on the traditional components of the professoriat—teaching, service, and scholarship. The volume costs \$37.50 (MLA members \$30.00) in cloth and \$19.75 (MLA members \$15.80) in paperback.

To purchase these or other MLA publications, please call customer services (646 576-5161), fax your order (646 576-5160), or place your order through the MLA Web site at www.mla.org. The MLA accepts Visa, MasterCard, and American Express. □

Honorary Members and Fellows

Members are invited to submit nominations for honorary members and fellows of the association. Honorary members are distinguished foreign scholars, and honorary fellows are distinguished men and women of letters of any nationality. The current rosters of honorary members and fellows can be found on pages 940–41 of the September 2008 (Directory) issue of *PMLA*.

Members who would like to recommend honorary members and fellows should refer to the instructions in the September *PMLA* (p. 936) or at the MLA Web site under MLA Prizes and Awards. □

GRANTS AND PRIZES

Competition Open for MLA Book Awards

The MLA Committee on Honors and Awards invites authors and editors to compete for the association's publication prizes. Six prizes that are awarded only in odd-numbered years will be presented at the 2009 convention: the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures, the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Italian Studies, the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature, the Morton N. Cohen Award for a Distinguished Edition of Letters, the MLA Prize for a Distinguished Scholarly Edition, and the Lois Roth Award for a Translation of a Literary Work. Biennial prizes are open to books or editions published in either of the two calendar years preceding the year in which the prize is presented, except for the prizes for Italian studies (the Scaglione Prize for Italian Studies and the Howard R. Marraro Prize) and the prizes for literary translation (the Scaglione Prize for a Translation of a Literary Work and the Lois Roth Award), for which works must have been published in the year prior to the year in which the awards are presented.

Prizes awarded annually by the MLA are the James Russell Lowell Prize for an outstanding book by a member of the association; the MLA Prize for a First Book; the MLA Prize for Independent Scholars, awarded for a distinguished scholarly book on language or literature; the Kenneth W. Mildener Prize for an outstanding work in the fields of language, culture, literacy, or literature with strong application to the teaching of languages other than English; the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize for an outstanding work in the fields of language, culture, literacy, or literature with strong application to the teaching of English; the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize for an outstanding book published in English in the field of Latin American and Spanish literatures and cultures; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Comparative Literary Studies; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for French and Francophone Studies; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies; the William Sanders Scarborough Prize for an outstanding scholarly study of black American literature or culture; and the MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies. A work published in 2008 may compete for one of the annual prizes that will be presented in 2009 if it meets the specific eligibility requirements for the prize. The deadline for entries for the 2008 James Russell Lowell Prize is 1 March 2009; for the First Book Prize and Scaglione Prize for a Translation of a Literary Work it is 1 April; for the Scaglione Publication Award it is 1 August; for all other awards it is 1 May.

Five prizes that are awarded only in even-numbered years will be presented at the January 2011 convention: the Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Studies, the MLA Prize for a Distinguished Bibliography, the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures, the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for a Translation of a Literary Work, and the Howard R. Marraro Prize.

Only members of the association may compete for the MLA Prize for a First Book; the Lowell prize; the Marraro prize; the MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies; and the Scaglione prizes for comparative literary studies, French and Francophone studies, Italian studies, studies in Germanic languages and literatures; and the Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies. Authors who are not members may compete if they join the association before the submission deadline. For detailed information about eligibility and the number of copies required to compete for any MLA prize, please call or write the Programs Office (646 576-5141; awards@mla.org). □

COMMITTEES

MLA Committee Meetings, October 2008–June 2009

The following schedule of MLA committee meetings is current as of 5 August 2008. Members wishing to bring issues to the attention of a committee may write to the committee chair listed in the September 2008 PMLA (pp. 875–80) or address letters to the executive director's office.

OCTOBER

- 2–3 Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities
- 2–3 PMLA Editorial Board
- 16–17 Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession
- 22–23 Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee
- 24–25 Executive Council
- 30–31 Advisory Committee on the *MLA International Bibliography*
- 30–31 Committee on Information Technology

NOVEMBER

- 6–7 ADFL Executive Committee
- 13–14 Committee on Community Colleges

DECEMBER

- 12 Radio Committee

JANUARY

- 29–30 PMLA Editorial Board
- 30 Committee on the New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare
- 30 Elections Committee

FEBRUARY

- 5–6 ADE Ad Hoc Committee
- 13 Nominating Committee
- 19–20 Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities
- 27–28 Executive Council

MARCH

- 5–6 Committee on the Literatures of People of Color in the United States and Canada
- 6 Texts and Translations Series Editorial Board
- 12–13 Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession
- 19–20 ADE Executive Committee
- 19–20 ADFL Executive Committee
- 23 Ad Hoc Committee on the Structure of the Annual Convention
- 26–27 Committee on Information Technology
- 30 Committee on Honors and Awards

APRIL

- 16–17 Publications Committee
- 30 Program Committee

MAY

- 1 Program Committee
- 7–8 PMLA Editorial Board
- 15–16 Executive Council

JUNE

- 1 Radio Committee

D E A D L I N E S

Fellowships and Grants

The following list includes fellowships and grants that have deadlines between 2 November and 31 December. More specific information, such as eligibility, description of grants, number of grants awarded, and sources for further details, can be found in the September 2008 PMLA, pages 1250–82. The arrangement is chronological, and each date is followed by the major title under which information is listed in the September issue.

NOVEMBER

- 12 American Council of Learned Societies
- 15 American Association of University Women Educational Foundation
- 15 American Institute for Yemeni Studies
- 15 Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania
- 15 Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies of the City University of New York
- 15 Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship at Wesleyan University's Center for the Humanities
- 30 University of Michigan Center for Afro-American and African Studies

DECEMBER

- early Oregon State University Center for the Humanities
- 1 American Classical League
- 1 American Philosophical Society
- 1 American Printing History Association
- 1 Bibliographical Society of America
- 1 Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies, Princeton University
- 1 Dictionary Society of North America
- 1 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowships
- 1 Romance Writers of America
- 1 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the New York Public Library
- 1 Sex, Race, and Globalization Project at the University of Arizona
- 1 University of Utah Tanner Humanities Center
- 3 Stanford Humanities Fellows
- 10 American Council of Learned Societies
- 15 American Association of University Women Educational Foundation
- 15 Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
- 15 Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation Grants for Venetian Research
- 15 Harvard University's Kathryn W. and Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies
- 15 Huntington Library
- 15 Kosciuszko Foundation
- 15 William Morris Society in the United States
- 20 American Association of University Women Educational Foundation
- 31 Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism

U P C O M I N G M L A D E A D L I N E S

OCTOBER

- 1 Deadline for receipt of resolutions to be considered and voted on at the 2008 Delegate Assembly meeting (see MLA constitution, articles 9.C.10 and 11.C.3–5); deadline for receipt of motions to be placed on the agenda of the 2008 Delegate Assembly meeting
- 10 Deadline for receipt of departmental administrators' job listings for the December 2008 *Job Information List*
- 31 Deadline for members' comments on 2007 Delegate Assembly resolutions

NOVEMBER

- 1 Deadline for applications from advanced graduate students for partial reimbursement for travel to the 2008 convention
- 1 Deadline for applications from non-tenure-track faculty members or unemployed members for partial reimbursement for travel to the 2008 convention
- 1 Deadline for applications from regular and life members residing outside the United States for partial reimbursement for travel to the 2008 convention
- 3 Deadline for submission of manuscripts for the *PMLA* special topic Literary Criticism for the Twenty-First Century

DECEMBER

- 1 Preregistration deadline for the 2008 convention
- 9 Deadline for receipt of 2008 convention addresses for "Who's Where"
- 10 Deadline for receipt of MLA election ballots (covering contests for second vice president, Executive Council, Delegate Assembly, and division executive committees)

JANUARY

- 5 Deadline for receipt of convention calls for papers for Spring 2009 *Newsletter*
- 9 Deadline for receipt of departmental administrators' job listings for the February 2009 *Job Information List*
- 31 Deadline for receipt of proposals for honorary members and fellows

MARCH

- 1 Deadline for submission of books competing for the 2009 James Russell Lowell Prize
- 6 Deadline for receipt of departmental administrators' job listings for the April 2009 *Job Information List*
- 15 Deadline for receipt of forum proposals for the 2009 convention
- 16 Postmark deadline for submissions to *Profession 2009*

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