Vulnerable Times addresses vulnerabilities of life, the planet, and our professional disciplines, in our own time and throughout history. Its aim is to illuminate acts of imagination and forms of solidarity and resistance that promote social change. The theme and my interest in vulnerability derive from my long-standing feminist work on lives that have been marginalized, forgotten, or omitted from dominant histories and narratives. They also emerge from a concern about the precarious place of education—particularly in languages, the humanities, and the arts—among the local and global priorities of the present moment. How do we mobilize the textual, historical, theoretical, and activist work we do as teachers and scholars of languages and literatures to shape conversations about broad social and political problems?

Marianne Hirsch
2013–14 MLA President
Vulnerable Times is the theme of the Presidential Forum at the 2014 MLA Annual Convention. The following are the programs for the Presidential Forum and its linked sessions.

Friday, 10 January

230. The Presidential Forum: Vulnerable Times
10:15 a.m.–12:00 noon, Sheraton IV–V, Sheraton Chicago
Presiding: Marianne Hirsch, Columbia Univ.
Speakers: Ariella Azoulay, Brown Univ.; Judith Butler, Univ. of California, Berkeley; David L. Eng, Univ. of Pennsylvania; Rob Nixon, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison; Diana Taylor, New York Univ.
Session Description: The forum will theorize dimensions of vulnerability that can be mobilized to think toward social change. Speakers will probe key sites defining vulnerable times: embodiment, poverty, climate, and the condition of being unequally governed, as well as resistance and reparation. Can vulnerability—shared or socially manufactured—be claimed as a space of interdependence, solidarity, and activism?

323. Trauma, Memory, Vulnerability
1:45–3:00 p.m., Chicago IX, Sheraton Chicago
Presiding: Susan Rubin Suleiman, Harvard Univ.
1. “Trauma Theory for Implicated Subjects,” Michael Rothberg, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana
2. “Cyberpoetics and Cryptopolitics: Facebook Pages as Memory Portals,” Ananya Jahanara Kabir, King's Coll. London
3. “Embodying Postconflict Memories: Teatro Testimonial in Chile,” María José Contreras, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
Responding: Susan Rubin Suleiman

Saturday, 11 January

523. The Politics of Language in Vulnerable Times
12:00 noon–1:15 p.m., Chicago VI, Sheraton Chicago
Presiding: Shu-mei Shih, Univ. of Hong Kong
Speakers: A. Suresh Canagarajah, Penn State Univ., University Park; Mary Louise Pratt, New York Univ.; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Columbia Univ.; Guadalupe Valdes, Stanford Univ.

607. Public Humanities
3:30–4:45 p.m., Chicago IX, Sheraton Chicago
Presiding: Laura Wexler, Yale Univ.
Speakers: Matti Bunzl, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana; James Chandler, Univ. of Chicago; Julie Ellison, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Farah Griffin, Columbia Univ.; Jean Elizabeth Howard, Columbia Univ.

MLA Commons
Visit the 2014 MLA Annual Convention blog at commons.mla.org for complete details on all presidential-theme sessions.

Online Program
A searchable program for the 2014 MLA Annual Convention will be available in October at www.mla.org/program.

Events Open to the Public during the 2014 MLA Annual Convention in Chicago

Honoring John Sayles

• The presentation of the 2013 Phyllis Franklin Award to John Sayles (Saturday, 11 January, 6:45 p.m., Sheraton IV–V, Sheraton Chicago)
• A Creative Conversation with Sayles and Maggie Renzi (Saturday, 11 January, 10:15–11:30 a.m., Chicago E, Chicago Marriott)
• A free screening of one of Sayles's films (please visit www.mla.org/program in October for more information)

Chicago Humanities Summit

The MLA, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the Chicago Humanities Festival are cosponsoring the Chicago Humanities Summit, to take place on Thursday, 9 January. For more information, please visit www.mla.org/convention_services#informational.
Vulnerable Times Presidential Forum Participants

Ariella Azoulay
Assistant Professor of Modern Culture and Media and Comparative Literature
Brown University

Matti Bunzl
Professor of Anthropology
University of Illinois, Urbana

Judith Butler
Maxine Elliot Professor
University of California, Berkeley

A. Suresh Canagarajah
Edwin Erle Sparks Professor
Penn State University, University Park

James Chandler
Barbara E. and Richard J. Franke Distinguished Service Professor
University of Chicago

Maria José Contreras
Assistant Professor in the School of Theatre
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Julie Ellison
Professor of American Culture and English
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

David L. Eng
Richard L. Fisher Professor of English
University of Pennsylvania

Farah Griffin
Professor of English and Comparative Literature and African-American Studies
Columbia University

Marianne Hirsch
William Peterfield Trent Professor of English and Comparative Literature
Columbia University

Jean Elizabeth Howard
George Delacorte Professor in the Humanities
Columbia University
Andreas A. Huyssen
Villard Professor of German and Comparative Literature
Columbia University

Ananya Jahanara Kabir
Professor of English Literature
King’s College London

Rob Nixon
Rachel Carson and Elizabeth Ritzmann Professor of English
University of Wisconsin, Madison

Mary Louise Pratt
Silver Professor
New York University

Michael Rothberg
Professor and Head of the Department of English
University of Illinois, Urbana

Shu-mei Shih
Professor of Comparative Literature and Chinese
University of Hong Kong

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
University Professor in the Humanities
Columbia University

Susan Rubin Suleiman
C. Douglas Dillon Professor of the Civilization of France and Professor of Comparative Literature
Harvard University

Diana Taylor
University Professor, Performance Studies and Spanish
New York University

Guadalupe Valdes
Bonnie Katz Tenenbaum Professor of Education
Stanford University

Laura Wexler
Professor of American Studies and of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Yale University