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*Lenore Grenoble, John Matthews Manly
 Distinguished Service Professor in Linguistics*

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TABLEAU

THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO | FALL 2014



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Tableau (Fall 2014, Volume 16, Number 1) is published biannually by the Division of the Humanities at the University of Chicago for alumni and friends. Editor: Elizabeth Station. Contributing Editors: Sarah Yatzek Farrell, AB'01; Courtney C. W. Guerra, AB'05; Carl Nash, AM'02; Tom Popelka; Adrienne Renberg. Proofreader: Laura Adamczyk. Designers: Guido Mendez; Tom Tian, AB'10. Contact: Division of the Humanities, 1115 East 58th Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60637, tableau.uchicago.edu.

ON THE COVER

A scene from *The Misanthrope* by Molière, performed at Court Theatre in 2013. Court's debut season in 1955 featured three Molière plays translated by French professor Richard d'Anjou—an example of the collaboration with Humanities faculty that has continued over six decades (see page 12).



Sur Mer, a 1916 illustration by Robert Bonfils from *En Guerre: French Illustrators and World War I*. Presented in the Library's Special Collections Research Center from October 14, 2014, to January 2, 2015, the exhibition looks at the Great War through the lens of French graphic artists of the era. Curators Teri J. Edelstein and Neil Harris, the Preston and Sterling Morton Professor Emeritus of History and Art History, have published a catalog with the University of Chicago Press featuring more than 100 of the exhibition's 130 illustrations.

Dear Alumni and Friends,



Martha T. Roth

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, we take great pride in the fact that the most senior members of our faculty teach and advise students at all levels—from incoming undergraduates to doctoral candidates. Our students benefit, and so do the faculty members whose research is enriched by teaching. As any instructor will tell you, the opportunity to exchange ideas with a thoughtful group of students can prompt new insights and reveal surprising interpretations; a class in which the participants connect on multiple levels can be one of life's most rewarding experiences, for both instructor and student.

This winter I will teach in the undergraduate Core for the first time since I became dean. In contrast to previous years, when I mostly taught seminars related to my expertise in Akkadian, I will be one of several faculty members leading a section of Reading Cultures—a yearlong sequence that uses literary and visual texts to explore how cultures transform. This will be a new course for me; in fact, I read some of the syllabus materials for the first time this past summer. Yet it presents an exciting opportunity to cover subjects outside my research area, to hone my skills as an instructor, to engage with a new group of students, and to ask vital questions relevant to all humanities fields.

The emphasis UChicago places on introductory courses and senior scholars teaching in the Core demonstrates our commitment to building the foundational knowledge that is critical for our stu-

dents' success. In my elementary Akkadian course, students learn the cuneiform signs and basic grammar that allow them to read the texts and understand the nuances of these ancient documents. Similarly, first-year College students in Reading Cultures confront works of all kinds from different eras—folktales, novels, films, music—to develop the skills of interpretation and close reading that are crucial to humanities scholarship and to their future endeavors beyond the University.

We train the strongest scholars and citizens by giving them the strongest foundations. In this issue of *Tableau* you will find examples of students, faculty members, and alumni who are making distinctive contributions as teachers and researchers. Whether they work in a suburban community college, an archive in Berlin, or our campus language laboratory, they share a dedication to the pursuit of knowledge and to making an impact on the world. And for many of us, that pursuit begins when we engage with, inspire, and learn from the next generation of University of Chicago students.

With best wishes,

Martha T. Roth
Dean of the Division of the Humanities

ILLUSTRATION COURTESY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS RESEARCH CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LIBRARY. PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT KOZLOFF.



THE MYSTERY OF G.W.F. HEGEL

Philosopher Sally Sedgwick investigates one of the field's most challenging thinkers.

BY BROOKE O'NEILL, AM'04

Sedgwick at home in Chicago. A specialist in German philosophy, she has made a career of deciphering complex ideas.

LIKE MANY AMERICAN GIRLS, philosopher Sally Sedgwick, AM'81, PhD'85, grew up reading Nancy Drew. By the time she graduated from the University of California, Santa Cruz, she had traded in teen detective mysteries for a different type of puzzle: philosophy. "It's the same thing, for grown-ups," says Sedgwick, who was an English major before landing in an intro philosophy class. Intrigued by issues of human reason—and impressed by the intellect of the department's only female professor—she switched her focus.

Sedgwick, the Liberal Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and affiliated professor of Germanic Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, has since made a career of deciphering complex ideas. A specialist in the history of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thought, she investigates the work of German theorists Immanuel Kant and G. W. F. Hegel, the latter of whom Bertrand Russell once described as "the hardest to understand of the great philosophers."

Sedgwick pieces together Hegel's scattered clues to make sense of what's going on in his work—and to persuade scholars to give the notoriously abstract philosopher another look. Her 2012 book, *Hegel's Critique of Kant: From Dichotomy to Identity* (Oxford University Press), for example, grapples with gaps Hegel saw in his predecessor's thought. The journal *Mind* praised Sedgwick for setting "a new standard for research on the relation of Kant and Hegel."

Now Sedgwick is focusing her efforts squarely on Hegel, splitting time between Chicago and Berlin on a Fulbright research fellowship to study the role of history in his philosophy. Best known for his 1807 book *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel posits a dynamic system of evolving human consciousness. "He strikes people as someone who doesn't seem to have much contact with the real world," Sedgwick says, but "most of his major works are written like developmental stories." Even his writings of logic that deal with pure concepts offer a narrative "suggesting that human reason is now more mature than it was once upon a time."

Sedgwick cites, for example, our culture's prevailing notion of human rights. According to this idea, we possess a right, such as the freedom to

express an opinion, simply because we are human. Yet that concept didn't always exist, nor, Hegel argues, was it always an object of human awareness. Rather, it developed over time as we came to perceive inadequacies in our prior conceptions.

When Aristotle presented his theory of natural subordination—the idea that only some individuals were fit to rule and others were born to be slaves—the concept of human rights had yet to appear. According to Hegel, it came about only as we became aware of gaps in past notions of rights and encountered conflicts generated by those conceptions. Hegel outlines this development, Sedgwick says, finding "traces of the idea in the Christian

ultly members. (Today, four of the department's 20 tenure-track faculty members are women.)

Sedgwick credits her adviser, the late **Manley Thompson**, AB'38, AM'38, PhD'42, an authority on Kant, for taking her seriously in a way many other faculty didn't. "It's not as if they were bad guys," she explains. "In their experience, women were daughters, mothers, lovers. They weren't philosophers."

A gender gap still persists in the field. While numbers are increasing, women earned only 31 percent of all philosophy doctorates in the United States, compared to roughly 60 percent in other humanities disciplines, according to 2011

Philosophy, if it is working correctly, should wean all of us of the idea that anything is simple.

—Sally Sedgwick, AM'81, PhD'85

view that each of us is our brother's keeper" and, later, in the political theories of Enlightenment thinkers such as Locke and Rousseau.

Under Hegel's approach, concepts like freedom, at first abstract and underdeveloped, become more concrete and nuanced. That said, his work often seems impenetrable. "Some philosophers begin their preface and say, 'This is the problem I'm working on, and this is the way I'm going to go about solving it,'" Sedgwick says. "He doesn't. If he does that at all, he does it so obscurely that it takes you 50 years to figure out." Asked what she would want to know from Hegel if he were alive today, Sedgwick pauses. "I would ask him, 'Why did you have to make it so difficult?'"

Hegel aside, philosophy was never the easy path for Sedgwick. As a graduate student in UChicago's Department of Philosophy, she was one of only two women in her cohort—the other dropped out after the first year—and there were no female fac-

data from the American Philosophical Association's Committee on the Status of Women. As of 2010, the percentage of women who finished PhDs in philosophy was lower than the percentage for math, chemistry, or economics.

Meanwhile, feminist philosophers have begun to reexamine the field's conventional thinking. What does it mean to speak of "rational man" or "human dignity" in political philosophy, for example? "Are these ideas themselves gendered?" asks Sedgwick, a past Central Division president of the American Philosophical Association. "From what perspective are we creating our philosophical concepts, and do they reflect the experience of everyone?"

Although feminist philosophy isn't an area she works in directly ("Kant and Hegel were both big misogynists, just as all philosophers were," she says), she welcomes its investigations. "One really great thing about philosophy," Sedgwick says, "is that if it is working correctly, it should wean all of us of the idea that anything is simple."

Clearly, she's taken Hegel to heart. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS KIRZEDER

FIND RECOMMENDED READINGS and listen to a podcast with Sally Sedgwick at tableau.uchicago.edu/hegel.

TEACHING COMMUNITY



From left: Jason Evans, Rosie Banks, and Amy Babinec at Harold Washington College in downtown Chicago.

Alumni find the right fit in the community college classroom.

BY TOM POPELKA

AFTER GRADUATING from UChicago’s master of fine arts program in 2009, **Amy Babinec** sought positions in local community colleges for two reasons. The first—and practical—motivation was the existence of a number of community colleges in the Chicago area with active art programs. The second reason was more personal: “I went to community college,” Babinec says. “It’s where I started looking at art as a career.”

Babinec is now an adjunct instructor at suburban Moraine Valley Community College and Harper Community College. She’s one of many alumni who have found careers as adjunct instructors, tenured professors, and administrators at such institutions—which, according to the American Association of Community Colleges, serve nearly half of all undergraduates in the United States.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN ZICH

“What we’re always looking for is someone who loves teaching,” says **Rosie Banks**, AM’99, PhD’12, associate dean of instruction at Harold Washington College in downtown Chicago. Community college instructors are expected to teach multiple sections of their courses every semester, serve on faculty committees, and hold office hours for their students. The teaching load can be four or five courses per semester for tenured faculty like **Jason Evans**, AM’02, an English professor at Prairie State College in south suburban Chicago Heights.

Evans, a graduate of the Master of Arts Program in the Humanities (MAPH) who earned a PhD in English from the University of Illinois at Chicago, teaches composition and literature. He advises MAPH students who take his UChicago course Teaching at Community Colleges “to draw on your education, not your expertise.” Professors at community colleges teach a wide variety of classes that may not be directly related to their graduate school specialization. “Be prepared to do more than your specific field,” suggests **Andrew Fansler**, MFA’10. A practicing sculptor, he has taught courses in art history, art appreciation, 3D art, and sculpture.

Most community colleges accept any student with a high school diploma or a GED. “We are open and accessible to anyone who walks through our doors,” says Banks. This policy produces an intellectually and demographically diverse student body. The average student at Prairie State is 29 years old, says Evans, and teaching an adult student population means his students have responsibilities—children, a full-time job, a mortgage—“that usually are not there for the traditional college student.”

The goals of each student differ as well: some are interested in an associate’s degree or transferring to a four-year university, while others are there for a certification or because they find the subject matter interesting. The community college’s job, Banks believes, is

We are open and accessible to anyone who walks through our doors.
—Rosie Banks, AM’99, PhD’12

to “move them toward whatever their goals may be.”

Evans points out that adult learners are often his best students, because in many ways “it’s the perfect time to do college—you know what you’re doing and you have a sense of how special it is.” His writing and composition courses offer some of his most professionally rewarding moments. “I’m teaching people who may never have thought of themselves as thinkers or intellectuals,” says Evans. “I get to see them discover themselves as writers and as college students.”

As an art instructor at Forsyth Technical Community College in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Fansler uses his students’ “diverse reads and diverse interpretations” to his advantage. “Art is a little more abstract” compared to other disciplines, he says, and allows for multiple interpretations. In a setting where some students are taking their first art course, their perspectives can spark open-ended conversations about the importance of art in everyday life.

Candidates for community college teaching jobs face similar challenges to those searching for jobs at four-year universities—tenure-track positions are difficult to find, and many instructors are hired on a part-time basis. Adjunct appointments may be as short as one semester, and such instructors often receive low pay with minimal benefits.

Babinec, who was looking for a full-time position this past summer, says that the challenges of adjuncting extend into the classroom. She wants to build relationships with her students, but commuting between part-

time jobs at two suburban schools and her Evanston home makes it difficult to be available for them.

For artists like Babinec and Fansler, adjunct positions do offer the benefit of flexibility. Babinec has more time to spend on her own practice and Fansler uses his summers off from teaching to do artist residencies. “Teaching is a good source of ideas for my own work,” he adds.

Balancing research and teaching can be difficult. Evans’s time is spent primarily on teaching-related tasks for his composition and writing courses, not on his personal research. In response, he has merged his research interests with his teaching commitments to focus his scholarship on composition and the teaching of writing.

When hiring new instructors or observing her colleagues in the classroom, Banks looks for individuals who see teaching not as a skill to be mastered but as an intellectual practice. The task of reaching students, she says, is “intellectually what’s interesting for me.” She finds the greatest challenge and reward in helping her composition and literature students learn to ask questions and use critical-thinking skills.

The community college career route may not be for everyone, Evans admits. But after more than a decade, he continues to enjoy what he calls the “process of teaching”—of developing new ways to reach his students and help them grasp concepts that they can then use in future courses or in their daily lives. “It’s terribly exciting,” he says, “to be present for that moment.” ■

READ CAREER ADVICE from alumni at tableau.uchicago.edu/community.



LANGUAGE ARTISTS

From left: Lima, McLean, Cox, and Forster gather at the University of Chicago Language Center in Cobb Hall, which offers technology-enhanced resources for instructors and students.

A conversation about teaching and learning second languages.

INTERVIEW BY ELIZABETH STATION

DURING THE 2014–15 academic year, the Division of the Humanities will offer instruction in 55 different languages—a typical number for the University. While widely spoken languages like Spanish and Arabic draw the highest enrollments, there are also classes in Georgian, Malayalam, Old Turkic, and other languages classified as “least commonly taught.”

Students from the College, graduate divisions, and professional schools account for nearly 5,000 enrollments in language courses taught by a talented corps of lecturers and tenure-track faculty. In 2007 the Division established the University of Chicago Language Center to support their efforts and encourage innovative, interactive language pedagogy on and beyond the campus.

With the advent of multimedia and web-based tools and easier access to speakers all over the world, language teaching and learning have moved in new directions. Four longtime instructors spoke with *Tableau* about their work: **Whitney Cox**, AM’06, PhD’06, an associate professor in South Asian Languages and Civilizations who

teaches Sanskrit; **Noha Forster**, a lecturer in Arabic and modern languages coordinator in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations; **Ana Maria Lima**, senior lecturer and Portuguese language coordinator in Romance Languages and Literatures; and **Alice McLean**, AM’86, a lecturer in French and Portuguese in Romance Languages and Literatures.

How has language instruction changed since you started teaching?

Noha Forster: I started teaching Arabic at the University in 2002, and we had a relatively small program. But more and more, we found that in-

coming freshmen had already had two or three years of Arabic in high school. We quickly had to understand this reality and react to it by creating courses at the advanced level.

Ana Maria Lima: The internet has changed the game. We now have online access to things that in the past I would have had to travel to Brazil and bring back: menus, supermarket fliers, videos, magazines, CDs. Our approach, the communicative approach, is to use as many authentic materials as we possibly can. We want to teach the language that people actually speak and use.

NF: I use the internet like I breathe for teaching. Here at the University we teach Modern Standard Arabic, which is in between the classical and colloquial. It allows you to pick up the newspaper and gives you access to most literature. But there’s a built-in conundrum in teaching Arabic and other languages. Students’ different reasons for studying a language often require radically different emphases: some students would say,

let’s use the language, while others may say, let’s see how the language works, then use it.

How does the emphasis on speaking proficiency play out in the classroom?

AML: Portuguese is very rich in terms of the grammar, but talking to people on the street, you notice that with verbs, they barely go beyond the present tense and the simple past. People don’t use the subjunctive anymore—but you have to teach that because it’s in the written language.

Whitney Cox: There’s an attempt to make Sanskrit into a modern spoken language. It’s one of the official languages of India, and there is a nightly news broadcast on All India Radio in Sanskrit. But it’s not the same as the written language. Because Sanskrit is intensely grammatical, I’m kind of a stick-in-the-mud. In class we do things that are still done in Sanskrit language schools in India—memorization and recitation—and the students like that.

Alice McLean: My colleagues **Nadine Di Vito** and **Claude Grangier** in Romance Languages and Literatures have been working on an innovative method that comes out of this idea of authenticity, that goes back and forth between what is written in French and what has now been lost in oral speech.

NF: I created a listening course, Arabic in Social Context, for advanced students. Students listen to various authentic speech episodes, noting code-switching between formal and colloquial Arabic and asking why people do that. They also note gendered language, youth language, and rural-urban differences.

What things have not changed about language teaching? What’s hard for students?

AML: Students have to learn vocabulary and the alphabet. They have to learn how to conjugate the verbs. They have to learn what the object pronouns are when they’re reading a text. Whenever I stop the class to teach a grammar rule, I usually say, “OK, I’m going to teach you something that you’ll never use, but you should be able to recognize it when you see it.”

WC: Having to teach people a nonnative script can be a nearly insurmountable challenge at the very start. Written Sanskrit also reflects the way that the sounds combine between and within words. People come into the class and they’re so enthusiastic, and during the first weeks it’s a process of trying to get over this initial set of challenges that are completely outside of their experience, even if they’ve studied other languages before.

NF: There are challenges for teachers too. A first-year language class meets five days a week, so it becomes incumbent upon you to be a kind of entertainer. You have to love what you’re doing enough to be flamboyant and theatrical about it and to solicit that from students.

What is most satisfying to you as a language teacher?

AM: Being in the classroom is usually really fun. When it’s all working there’s a lot of interaction and yet we’re being efficient: we’re moving forward, everybody’s learning, and you can see and measure progress.

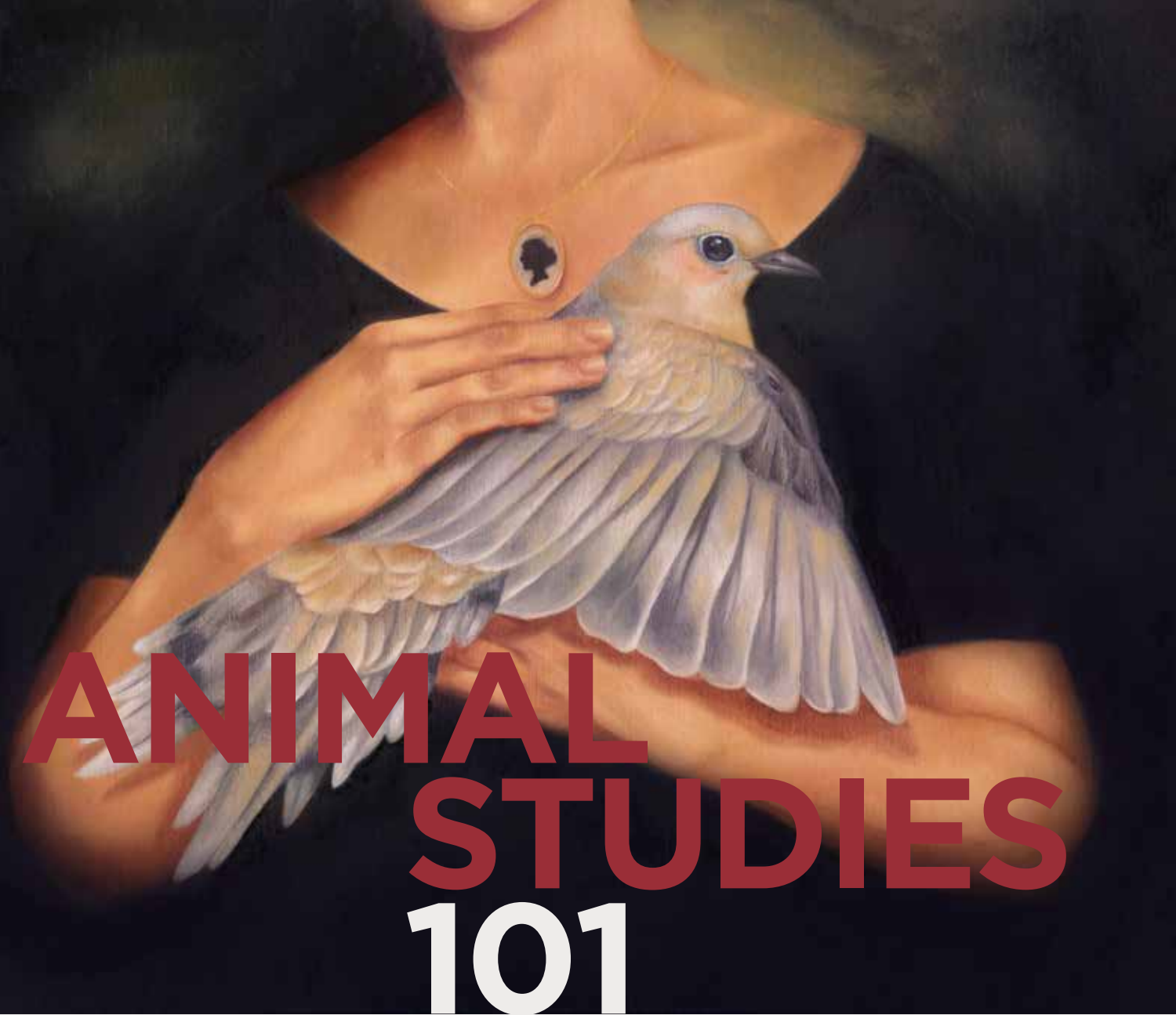
AML: You don’t even know how it happens. A professor of mine used to say, “It has not become soup yet,” and then he would say, “Now it’s soup.” You keep adding the elements. In the beginning a class is dependent on the instructor, and slowly it shifts and becomes more about the students. They are producing more, they are talking among themselves, and you see the community forming. I love that.

NF: In the language classroom, we also have the privilege of conveying the culture. It’s a good place to get something that you can’t in other classes.

WC: The first and second—and probably the third and fourth—year of Sanskrit are such a slog. But that moment of conveying the pure joy that I take in my subject to other people—there’s nothing else like that professionally. Even for students who are just starting out, whether it’s the structure of the language itself or being able to convey something about the civilization, that’s the best part of my job. ■

READ AN EXPANDED VERSION and learn more about language study at UChicago at tableau.uchicago.edu/language.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS KIRZEDER



Two views of a burgeoning field.

AS TOLD TO CARRIE GOLUS, AB'91, AM'93

ILLUSTRATION BY JEN LOBO

ANIMAL STUDIES, described by a 2009 *Chronicle of Higher Education* article as “a force to be reckoned with in philosophy, literary and cultural studies, history, and other fields with a traditionally humanistic bent,” is nonetheless difficult to define.

Here’s an attempt: animal studies focuses on the interaction of humans and animals while questioning anthropocentric bias.

As for origins, some scholars point to Peter Singer’s *Animal Liberation* or Carol Adams’s “The Sexual Politics of Meat” (both from 1975) as starting points; others look to Jacques Derrida’s 2008 essay “The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow).”

Two UChicago scholars—Heather Keenleyside and Joela Jacobs—spoke to *Tableau* about animal studies as an emerging discipline. They described their research, teaching, and conversations in the field—and explained why writing about dogs does not require you to have one.



Heather Keenleyside, AM’03, PhD’08, an assistant professor in English Language and Literature, has taught at UChicago since 2008. Her book *Animals and Other People: Forms of Life in Eighteenth-Century Literature* is forthcoming.

My work centers on animals in the literature and philosophy of eighteenth-century British writing. In some ways, this is an old topic. There’s a lot of existing work on fables and symbolism, in which animals stand in for something else. Women poets use animals to figure their own constricted possibilities; animals also come into debates around slavery. My interest—and the interest of animal studies—is to get out from under that familiar analysis and wonder what these writers might have actually known about animals.

My interest started when I was living in London in 2001. I was struck by what a national trauma the foot-and-mouth crisis was in Britain. Around the same time I read J. M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*, which is about political problems in South Africa but centers on dogs. Coetzee has been very influential in animal studies.

Animal studies at the time didn’t really exist. I remember writing my proposal to get into graduate school and my adviser saying, “Well, no one will accuse you of being fashionable.” I was here for a couple of years, and suddenly animal studies became a thing.

Right now the field of animal studies is messy and in formation. At UChicago we have a really great interdisciplinary workshop, but the membership doesn’t really extend to the biological sciences. At some universities, animal studies is centered on the hard sciences and includes only a few token ethicists from the humanities. The terminology also hasn’t been settled yet: “critical animal studies” versus “animal studies” versus “animality studies.” The fractures matter to some people but not others.

I teach two animal studies courses. The *Lives of Animals* covers eighteenth-century literature and philosophy with some contemporary theory. One of the big narratives about animal studies turns on Descartes. He’s the bad guy; the oversimplified version of his work is that animals are just automatons. We also cover what was a flourishing genre in the eighteenth century: the life stories of all kinds of animals and inanimate objects. It reads like children’s literature now, but it didn’t start out that way.

My other course, *The Animal: Theories of Nonhuman Life*, is not historically specific. I’ve taught everything from Virginia Woolf’s *Flush*, her biography of Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s spaniel, to films like Sam Fuller’s *White Dog*, about a dog who’s trained to attack black people and the black trainer who tries to untrain him. It’s clearly allegorical but disturbing and pulpy, and students don’t know what to make of it.

I didn’t grow up with animals at all; I’m uncomfortable around them. I like cats but am very allergic. I wrote an essay a couple of years ago for a semiacademic journal, and the editors really wanted me to frame the argument with my personal experiences with animals. That’s not the way into this for me. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON SMITH AND KATIEGHT PRZYGODA



Joela Jacobs, a graduate student in Germanic Studies, is working on her dissertation, “Speaking the Non-Human: Plants, Animals, and Marginalized Humans in Literary Grotesques from Oskar Panizza to Franz Kafka.”

My dissertation, which I’m just wrapping up, is on authors of grotesque short prose around 1900. These authors look to nonhuman figures—plants, animals—and to marginalized human figures to understand what it means to be a human in the modern world. It’s a shift of perspective that allows them to show how human behavior can be grotesque and also to avoid censorship. They used plants to talk obliquely about homosexuality, for example.

While working on this literature I realized I had to think more about plants and animals. I discovered animal studies around 2011 and, some time later, that there were other people doing it at UChicago—in English, Classics, the Divinity School. So we formed a reading group to try to tackle the field together. We read Genesis, Darwin, Kafka. Eventually the reading group became a workshop and began to invite speakers.

There have been a lot of people working on animals on their own for a really long time. When I’m asked if animal studies is the latest fad in academia, I can point to this history. But if you read texts from 10 or 12 years ago, you can notice that the writers hedge a lot more, that they explain why they’re doing what they’re doing. In more recent texts, that doesn’t happen as much. There’s the consciousness of a discipline.

Last spring I helped organize a conference, *Why Do Animal Studies?* We felt like that question hadn’t been asked by animal studies scholars, whereas people outside the field ask us all the time. We had over 60 paper submissions, the majority of them from faculty, and more than 90 people registered to attend.

Animal studies has various corners, which all have their own answers to that question of why. The ethical approach is the most clear: we need to take better care of animals, be it as companion species or other species next to humans. For someone like me who does literary animal studies, the question is much harder. I would say looking through someone else’s eyes is always an enlightening exercise. The way we represent animals tells us a lot about the human relationship to others and to ourselves.

The University of Chicago Press is actually working on a book of critical terms for animal studies, and the members of our workshop met with them about it. It was really interesting to center in on a term and discuss it. *Wild*, for instance. Are there even wild animals anymore? Is *wild* pejorative?

My colleagues in other fields sometimes assume animal studies people must all be vegan, have pets, or work for animal shelters. And some do. In the workshop we have a wide range of ethical and political commitments to animals. The lines are more complicated and blurred than one might expect.

I have a cat, but I write about dogs, which confuses people—and they always ask. It’s something that happens in a lot of disciplines—the assumption that men can’t do gender studies, or Christians can’t do Jewish studies. I think it’s healthy to have a little bit of a distance, though I probably would know more about dogs if I had one. I’d have a different kind of knowledge. ■

FIND RECOMMENDED READINGS at tableau.uchicago.edu/animal.

NEW FACULTY FALL 2014

MARGARETA INGRID CHRISTIAN, Assistant Professor in Germanic Studies, comes to UChicago after serving as a Mellon post-doctoral scholar at the Center for the Humanities at Tufts University. Her Princeton PhD thesis, “Horror Vacui: A Cultural History of Air around 1900,” spans multiple media, including poetry, dance, art history, and occult photography. The recipient of a dissertation completion fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies and the Mellon Foundation, she also studied at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin as a graduate student and at the Freie Universität Berlin after completing her BA at Harvard.

THEASTER GATES joins the Visual Arts faculty as Professor after teaching in the department and serving the University in various capacities since 2007. In his new role, Gates, the director of UChicago’s Arts and Public Life Initiative, will focus more deeply on his artistic practice and engage students in the College and the Division’s MFA program. His art exhibitions and urban revitalization efforts—which frequently overlap—have received local, national, and international attention. Drawing on his background in urban planning, sculpture, and religious studies, Gates seeks to create immersive installations and sculptures that offer pointed social critique, enabling institutional change in the process.

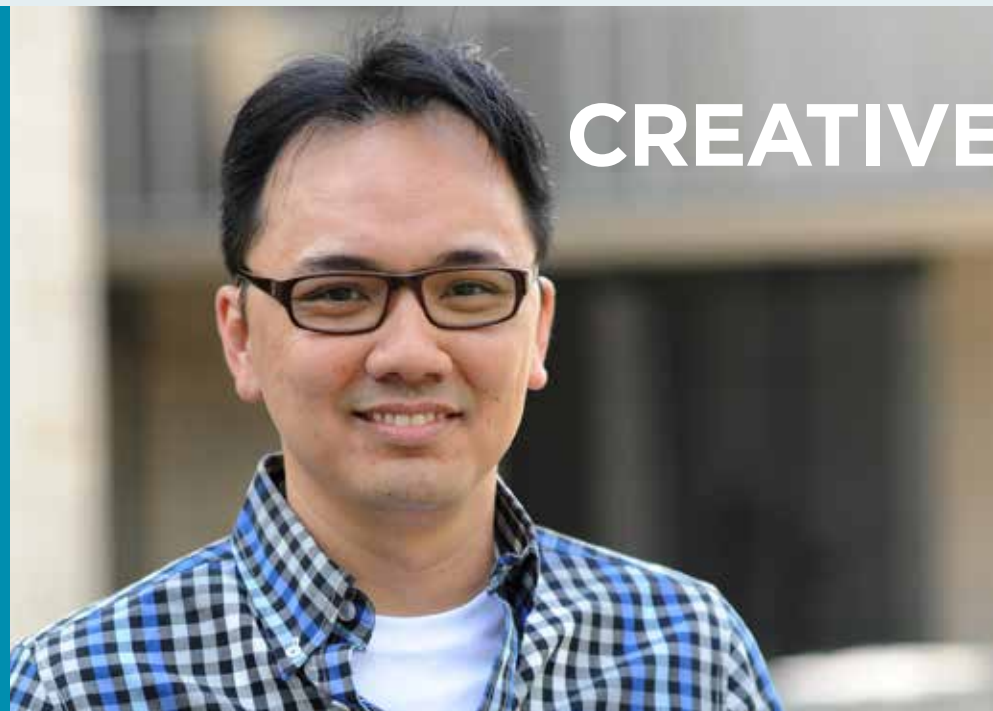
TIMOTHY HARRISON is a specialist in the Renaissance and early modern periods; now an Instructor in English Language and Literature, he will begin an appointment as Assistant Professor in January 2015. His dissertation, “Forms of Sentience in Early Modernity,” examines how authors including Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton depict the feeling of being alive. After undergraduate and graduate work at the University of Toronto, Harrison completed his PhD in English and book history and print culture. His article “Adamic Awakening and the Feeling of Being Alive in Paradise Lost” (*Milton Studies* 54, 2013) won the Milton Society of America’s Albert C. Labriola Award. He is currently coauthoring “John Donne’s Physics,” the first chapter of which appeared in the December 2013 *English Literary History*.

ZACHARY SAMALIN joins the English Language and Literature faculty as Assistant Professor after completing his PhD at the CUNY Graduate Center, where he received a Mellon/ACLS dissertation completion fellowship, and his BA at Johns Hopkins. He received the CUNY faculty’s annual prize for his dissertation, “The Masses Are Revolting: Victorian Culture and the Aesthetics of Disgust.” Samalin studies how a negative emotion like disgust helped to define the modern British public sphere by reading Victorian literature alongside Enlightenment thought, social discourse, and ideas of sanitary reform. His article “Dickens, Disinterest and the Poetics of Clouded Judgment” was just published by *Dickens Studies Annual* (45, 2014).

MEGAN SULLIVAN, Assistant Professor in Art History, comes to UChicago from a faculty position at Tulane. After receiving her BA at Brown in comparative literature, she attended Harvard for her PhD in the history of art and architecture. At Harvard she received the Jorge Paulo Lemann Scholarship for Brazilian studies and served as assistant curator for the Latin American/Latino Art Forum in the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. In her dissertation and current book project, “Locating Abstraction: The South American Coordinates of the Avant-garde, 1945–1960,” she explores the trajectory of abstract art in Latin America. She is coeditor of *A Companion to Modern and Contemporary Latin American and Latino Art*, forthcoming from Wiley Blackwell in 2015.

SOFÍA TORALLAS TOVAR is Associate Professor in Classics, where she spent the past two years as Visiting Professor, with a joint appointment in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. Her dual affiliations reflect her range of research interests, including papyrus documents, social history, ancient religion, and historical linguistics. A native of Spain, she was previously a tenured researcher in the Institute of Languages and Cultures of the Mediterranean and Near East at the Spanish National Research Council in Madrid, and her work has been widely published in journals and edited volumes in both English and Spanish. Her degrees—a BA/MA in Classical Philology with a major in Greek and a PhD in Classics—are from Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

VU TRAN, Assistant Professor of Practice in the Arts in English Language and Literature and the Committee on Creative Writing, began teaching as a Lecturer at UChicago in 2010. He has a PhD from the Black Mountain Institute at the University of Nevada–Las Vegas, where he was a Glenn Schaeffer Fellow in fiction. He also has an MFA from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop at the University of Iowa as well as BA and MA degrees from the University of Tulsa. He was a finalist for the 2011 Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Literature and a 2009 recipient of the Whiting Writers’ Award. His short stories appear in numerous collections, and he is currently editing his first novel—tentatively titled *This or Any Desert*—under contract with W. W. Norton. ■



CREATIVE HONESTY

A creative writing teacher helps his students—and himself—find truth in fiction.

As UChicago’s newest Assistant Professor of Practice in Creative Writing, **Vu Tran** is tasked with cultivating young authors’ skills—an endeavor that’s as personal as it is pedagogical, requiring a blend of philosophy and pragmatism. “The practical aspect of it is removing bad writing from their work—and by ‘bad writing’ I mean objectively the mistakes that most writers make when they first start out,” he says. “Philosophically, I help students organize their ideas of what it means to be human—to identify it, think

about it, and then dramatize it in fiction.”

That challenge is specific to each individual and often far removed from his or her other academic pursuits. “Students tell me that when they take a creative writing class, they use a different part of their brain,” says Tran, who teaches both graduate and College classes. Intense and honest self-reflection is essential to good writing, he believes. To improve, students must be willing to listen to honest feedback and then respond to it in their work.

To develop an environment where students will accept unvarnished critique, Tran focuses on earning their trust. “I create a relationship where they can be open and honest and not care about what they should do to please everyone,” he says. The goal is to hone each student’s authorial

voice, stripping away whatever “bad writing” surrounds and obscures it. He gets them to trust their instincts, embrace their own unique outlook, and find a point of view that will carry their ideas. “Fiction is an obstructed view of the world,” he explains. “Even with an omniscient narrator you can’t see everything. But that kind of limited blindness is crucial, because that’s what motivates the story.”

Tran guides students toward harmonious combinations of plot, character, perspective, and style—and ultimately toward having faith in their abilities. Even so, he acknowledges that it can be difficult for writers to feel satisfied with their work. Tran is the author of award-winning fiction and a popular teacher. (See his biography above.) Yet when asked what he

struggles with most, he laughs and replies, “What don’t I struggle with?”

As he finishes editing his first novel, a Las Vegas detective story, Tran reflects on the range of inspirations that drive his writing process. While the narrative is important—“as a reader, I’ve always read for plot, and character often comes out of that”—some pieces begin as explorations of a philosophical concept or a compelling setting. The trick is wrangling these disparate elements and bringing them together to produce “something that feels honest and true and moving and compelling and convincing, all at the same time.” That’s the standard Tran holds for his own writing, and he wants his students to achieve it too.

—Courtney C. W. Guerra, AB’05 ■

READ MORE ABOUT VU TRAN and writing at tableau.uchicago.edu/tran.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS KIRZEDER

A STAGE FOR THE AGES

Court Theatre, now in its 60th season, went from “a new type of summer theatre” to a Chicago institution.

COURT THEATRE is a mainstay of the Chicago theater scene, a company so dependable that in 2006 the *Wall Street Journal* dubbed it the most consistently excellent in America.

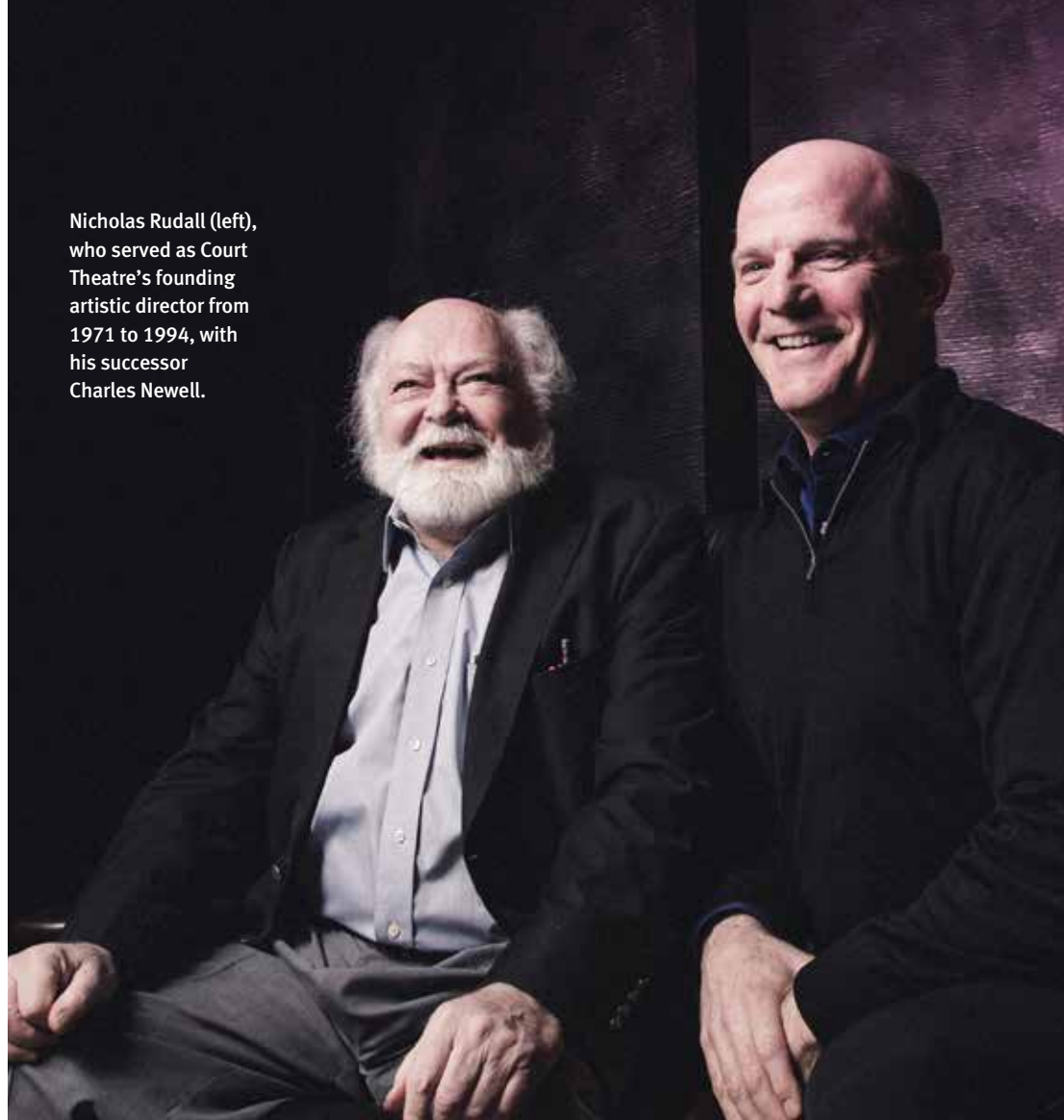
But **Nicholas Rudall** remembers when the campus company was so short of cash that he had to donate a fridge for theater staff to use. Rudall, a professor emeritus in Classics who was Court’s artistic director from 1971 to 1994, laughs at the memory. “That’s the way theater actually works,” he says of Court’s hardscrabble beginnings. “It comes from people with a passion for it and people willing to do anything for it.”

Court was the brainchild of University Theater director **Marvin Phillips**, who in 1955 wanted to capitalize on the popularity of outdoor summer theater.

That summer, a coalition of students, faculty, and community members performed three Molière plays on a small Elizabethan stage under the elms of Hutchinson Courtyard. The plays were translated by French professor **Richard d’Anjou**—an early example of the collaboration between Court and UChicago scholars that has since become a hallmark.

“The University of Chicago is . . . creating a new type of summer theatre,” Phillips wrote in a memo to University leaders after the company’s first season. “Instead of following a star system or relying on the production of last year’s Broadway’s successes, we are presenting only examples of the world’s great dramatic literature in the best tradition of the academic theatre.”

Nicholas Rudall (left), who served as Court Theatre’s founding artistic director from 1971 to 1994, with his successor Charles Newell.



Today, Court’s Center for Classic Theatre taps the expertise of faculty to translate and adapt plays and advise the actors and production team. In 2011 **Travis Jackson**, associate professor in Music, advised Court’s artistic director **Charles Newell** on the score for his Jeff Award-winning production of *Porgy and Bess*. Last year a conversation between Newell and **Judith Zeitlin**, professor in East Asian Languages and Civilizations, resulted in a daring revival of David Henry Hwang’s *M. Butterfly*.

Court’s emphasis on classic theater and willingness to stage difficult modern works were welcome additions to Chicago’s still-emergent theater scene in the 1960s and 1970s, says Rudall. Back then, “you couldn’t look in the newspaper and decide to go see an Ibsen play or even Shakespeare.”

Court and its directors embraced the challenge of producing the works of Brecht and Shaw and Euripides. Rudall’s background in classics proved to be an asset. “Even when I was teaching Greek tragedies in Greek, I was always thinking of them as theater, not just as literature,” he explains. “Both sides have touched each other.”

Although Court performed serious plays, the company still liked to enjoy themselves at the theater. A 1969 memo reminded performers that “DRINKING INTOXICATING LIQUORS in and around

Mandel Hall is against a University law. Abuses of it have cost us a dress rehearsal once, in the old days, so never again.”

Productions earned strong reviews that attracted talented actors and technical staff from across the country. A young Kevin Kline made his Chicago debut in *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore* (directed by Rudall) in 1968.

In the mid-1970s, University of Chicago president **Edward Levi**, LAB’28, PhB’32, JD’35, asked Rudall to lead Court’s transformation into a year-round professional company. It was, Rudall believes, part of Levi’s effort to make Hyde Park more attractive to faculty and students.

Rudall and his colleagues raised funds for a 250-seat theater to be Court’s permanent home. Completed in 1981, the Abelson Auditorium now brings in 35,000 patrons annually to see Court productions. Under Newell’s leadership, partnerships with faculty remain a tradition: Court will use Rudall’s translation of Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Aulis* for the current, 60th season. It’s a fitting tribute to the company’s origins as it steps toward the future.

—*Susie Allen, AB’09* ■

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE 2014–15 SEASON at courttheatre.org.

FROM POETRY TO PARTICLE PHYSICS

The University’s Center in Delhi creates new opportunities for global exchange.

THE NEWEST of the University of Chicago’s global teaching and research communities, the Center in Delhi celebrated its opening in March 2014. Like its counterparts in Paris and Beijing, “the center is intended to serve the intellectual interests of all parts of the University,” says faculty director **Gary Tubb**, a Sanskrit scholar and professor in South Asian Languages and Civilizations.

The 22 faculty projects that the center will fund in its first year reflect that broad mandate. The center will host, for example, a conference on social enterprise and sanitation, a project to annotate essential films from India’s Art Cinemas movement, and a workshop to explore future partnerships in particle physics research. A UChicago poetry professor will give a reading with a Delhi novelist. Cancer researchers from India and UChicago will explore possibilities for collaboration.

Most of the projects bring together interdisciplinary teams; many involve partnerships with Indian institutions. They all fall within the center’s three areas of scholarship: business, economics, law, and policy; culture, society, religion, and arts; and science, energy, medicine, and public health.

The Center in Delhi plans to make an annual call for proposals from UChicago faculty, encouraging not only India specialists but also scholars who have never worked there to submit their ideas. “We hope to be of use to faculty, students, and projects throughout the region of South Asia,” says Tubb, who will serve a three-year term as faculty director.

Located in Connaught Place—a busy financial district—the center offers meeting and office space for faculty, staff, undergraduates, and graduate students as well as spaces for conferences, exhibits, and public events. The goal is to give UChicago scholars venues to work with Indian researchers and students from a wide array of institutions and with colleagues from around the world. The center will also schedule regular programming to engage UChicago alumni and friends in the region.

Six projects spearheaded by Division of the Humanities faculty members will receive center funding in 2014–15. They include workshops on audio cultures of India and on archaeological looting and antiquities trafficking; a project to study traditional Tibetan books from the National Library of Bhutan; and a research trip to give MFA students exposure to contemporary arts in Delhi, Mumbai, and Kerala.

Such efforts are timely, says Tubb, because the humanities are at risk in India: “There’s an understandable tendency to focus on what are seen as more urgent, practical needs in the sciences, economics, and so forth.”

In India and many other countries, the humanities are sometimes seen as a luxury or less productive than other endeavors. “But it’s already become clear that there is a great interest in India in the humanities, despite these problems,” says Tubb. Over time, he hopes the center will function as “a very visible locale for the exchange of ideas and the development of new knowledge,” in the humanities and many fields. —*Elizabeth Station* ■

VISIT THE CENTER IN DELHI VIRTUALLY at uchicago.in.



Faculty director Gary Tubb introduces a panel on early childhood education at the Center in Delhi’s opening in March.

FIND IT ONLINE at tableau.uchicago.edu/on-campus

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