

# TABLEAU



THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO | SPRING 2013

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Tableau (Spring 2013, Volume 14, Number 2) is published biannually by the Division of the Humanities at the University of Chicago for alumni and friends. Editor: Elizabeth Station. Contributing Editors: Sarah Yatzeck Farrell, AB'01; Courtney C. W. Guerra, AB'05; Carl Nash, AM'02; Adrienne Renberg; Alyssa Vincent. Proofreader: Rhonda Smith. Design: Winge Design Studio, Chicago. Contact: Division of the Humanities, 1115 East 58th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637, [tableau@uchicago.edu](mailto:tableau@uchicago.edu).

### ON THE COVER

This spring the Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society selected its first cohort of interdisciplinary faculty research projects. Renovation of its future home at 5701 South Woodlawn Avenue (pictured) begins this fall. Find out more at [neubauercollegium.uchicago.edu](http://neubauercollegium.uchicago.edu).

*Photography by Jason Smith*



"The beat of Chicago's urban heart is the elevated rapid train system, known as the L," writes Stefanie Etow, AM'12. Her photos of the "L" appeared in the inaugural issue of *Colloquium*, a new journal (see page 11).

## Dear Alumni and Friends,

**A SUCCESSFUL DISSERTATION** represents the culmination of the doctoral degree process: it demonstrates scholarly prowess and proves that a student can engage with original sources, ask original questions, and come to original insights. When you begin studying a field—and throughout your career—it’s an ongoing challenge to determine what is indeed “original,” that is, the difference between what you don’t yet know and what is not yet known. Academics often come up with seemingly brilliant ideas only to realize our predecessors already have pursued them without productive ends. The goal of a PhD program is to help young scholars learn how to overcome these and other challenges so they can conduct independent critical research, whether in the academy, government, or business.

Conceiving and completing a dissertation is never easy, rarely linear, and frequently convoluted. My own story is not atypical. I initially began my PhD in Assyriology because I was interested in Mesopotamian literature: the Epic of Gilgamesh, the first flood stories and creation stories, and so forth. But I soon found that I connected with a particular professor who taught Babylonian legal history and liked thinking about textual and social-historical problems through the lens of the law, and my course work shifted. That was my first detour.

The second came when I was researching my dissertation and learned that my main topic, along with access to the necessary primary materials, had been “claimed” by a more senior scholar at another institution. After a brief panic, I decided to refocus my research on an artifact I had originally intended to include as an appendix: a large Sumerian clay prism detailing model court cases and contracts circa 1700 BCE—the kind of handbook that a law professor might put together for his students.

As I worked to decipher the text and explore the legal context and cultural history, my dissertation shifted to a study of the scholastic tradition in ancient Babylonia: how legal norms and practices were transmitted from generation to generation. Fortunately, I was able to spend crucial time with primary sources in the Louvre, the British Museum, and other collections. That experience and the personal connections I made—with archivists, librarians, and scholars from all over the world—gave depth and perspective to my work.



Martha Roth at the Oriental Institute, 1982.

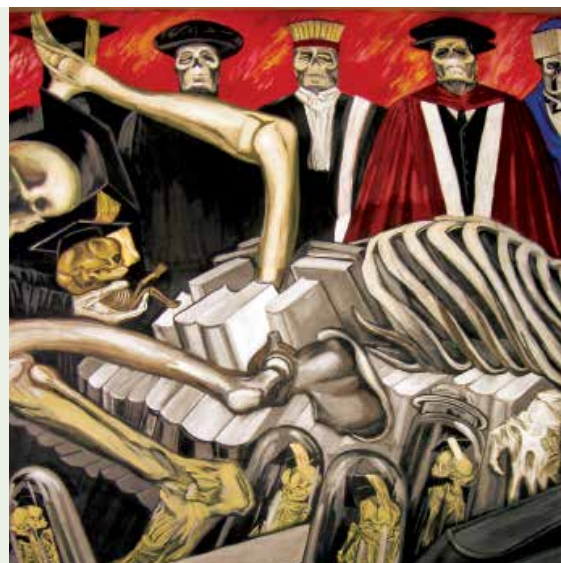
My choice of mentors and the identification of my primary sources thus shaped my research interests in unanticipated ways. Such serendipitous routes are not uncommon, and my story echoes many others that illustrate why graduate students need access to a broad range of materials, artifacts, and contexts.

Such formative experiences are impossible without strong financial support. This is why we aim to increase the number of travel grants, research awards, and dissertation write-up fellowships available to our PhD candidates. Many of our current and recent graduate students can tell stories similar to mine: academic research is never predictable and uncomplicated but always entails risks, false turns, changes in direction, and unexpected forays into new areas of study. Our responsibility as professors and advisers is to provide our students with the tools they will need to identify and pursue important questions. With your continued support, they will succeed and will enrich their fields and human knowledge.

Sincerely yours,

Martha T. Roth  
Dean of the Division of the Humanities





# ONTOPIIC

From nostalgia to Chicano literature to the Paris Salon, students reveal the inspirations for their dissertation subjects.

BY ALYSSA VINCENT

**PERSONAL INTEREST. PROFESSORIAL INFLUENCE.** A spark rather than a rational calculation. The paths that lead a graduate student to a dissertation topic are as wide ranging as the topics themselves.

"One day, at a friend's recommendation, I watched the Japanese director Masaki Kobayashi's portmanteau film *Kwaidan*," says Shengyu Wang, AM'11, a PhD student in Comparative Literature. After researching the short-story collection that inspired the film and finding connections to Chinese supernatural tales, he decided to write about those stories and their flourishing in modern Chinese newspapers and as published English translations and adaptations at the turn of the twentieth century.

Julia Langbein, AM'07, a PhD candidate in Art History, decided to focus her dissertation on Salon caricatures in the Parisian popular illustrated press from the mid-1840s to the 1880s. During her first quarter of graduate school, she took a class on the emergence of public art criticism in the nineteenth century and the professor showed some of the caricatures in passing.

"Something just clicked for me when I saw them," says Langbein. "When I found out nobody had ever really looked into them, there was no doubt about it. This was the perfect set piece to ask the kinds of questions that interested me, not only to figure out this niche genre, but to think about parody, pastiche, and imitation as forms of criticism."

Students' early questions about a potential topic may be too broad, says Dipesh Chakrabarty, the Lawrence A. Kimpton Distinguished Service Professor in History and South Asian Languages and Civilizations. "We want them to eventually make their interests into a researchable proposition, which means getting them to understand both the strengths of the discipline they've chosen to work in and, in a way, its limits."

Most students develop a topic by their third year—a decision that shapes their first experience on the job market and first book project. Even so, when choosing a topic, "you can't think, 'The hot conversation is X; I'm going to be in the hot conversation,'" says Lauren Berlant, the George M. Pullman Professor in English. "It's important to know something about the current market, but it can't be the constraining horizon."



Langbein agrees. “You can’t just look at the field and say, ‘There’s a need here,’ or, ‘There’s a gap there.’ For the dissertation writer’s sanity and for the prospects of the project, the question must be, ‘Could anybody else come along and do this project in the same way?’ The closer you are to no, the better.”

Sometimes students finish their course work and still find themselves at a loss for a topic. When that happens, advises Bill Orchard, AM’02, PhD’12, “trust your instincts and pursue those questions and interests that you find yourself returning to.” Orchard originally came to the University as a Victorianist but shifted gears after writing a paper about Junot Díaz’s short-story collection *Drown* for a seminar on authenticity. That spurred him to continue exploring representations of Latinos/as in visual and literary forms. His dissertation focused on the relationships between Chicano/a literature and graphic art forms including murals, posters, and comic books.

Orchard’s winding path led to a tenure-track position—he is now an assistant professor of English at Queens College/City University of New York. Yet roughly half of new PhDs with postgraduation employment find themselves working outside the academy. In the humanities and social sciences, the challenging job market and students’ desire to prepare for alternative careers may slowly change the nature of the dissertation, beginning with the topic chosen.

Some researchers are using collaboration and digital humanities tools to connect with wider audiences; a few even argue that producing a single-author, book-length monograph isolates and limits young scholars. “The majority of dis-

sertations, produced in paper and ink, ignore the interactive possibilities of a new-media culture,” writes Stacey Patton in “The Dissertation Can No Longer Be Defended,” a 2013 article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

The traditional dissertation remains the centerpiece of humanities PhD programs at UChicago. But two doctoral candidates—Jonathan Schroeder in English and Rebekah Baglini, AM’10, in Linguistics—are supplementing their individual dissertation work with an interdisciplinary digital humanities project.

The students’ research partnership looks at the evolution of the word “nostalgia” and utilizes text mining and other quantitative data-analysis methods to create a corpus that tracks different uses of the word in texts. Their goal is to understand how nostalgia became what Schroeder calls “a modern retrospective emotion. Up until the end of the nineteenth century, nostalgia actually names a medical pathology that largely afflicted soldiers and sailors and other people who were indentured into service,” he explains.

The collaborative project supports Schroeder’s dissertation on nostalgia as well as Baglini’s work on stativity—a category of words that express a state or condition. Baglini’s dissertation examines stativity in Wolof, a language of Senegal that has several different constructions meant

to connote a feeling like nostalgia. “Subtle meaning differences among these constructions could have important implications for my dissertation work,” says Baglini, “and my collaboration with Jonathan will help to direct my questions about the corresponding concept in Wolof.”

“What I find really great about this is that it’s uncharted territory for both of us,” adds Schroeder. Wang, the student writing about Chinese supernatural tales, shares that spirit of adventure. In choosing his dissertation topic, he took comfort from Santiago’s quest in Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*: “Have faith in yourself and keep looking . . . eventually you may catch something big.”

**TO LEARN** about other dissertations and student projects, check out *Oysters, Rockefeller*, a podcast produced by Julia Langbein and fellow Art History PhD candidate Ingrid Greenfield, AM’07, at [oystersrockefeller.org](http://oystersrockefeller.org).

IMAGES: MOVIE STILL FROM *KWAIDAN*, 1964; CARICATURES FROM *LE JOURNAL POUR RIRE*, 1853, COURTESY JULIA LANGBEIN; JOSÉ CLEMENTE OROZCO, DETAIL FROM *THE EPIC OF AMERICAN CIVILIZATION*, 1932–34, COMMISSIONED BY THE TRUSTEES DARTMOUTH COLLEGE, HANOVER, NEW HAMPSHIRE; TSUKIOKA YOSHITOSHI, FROM *ONE HUNDRED GHOST STORIES OF CHINA AND JAPAN*, 1865, {{PD-ART}}; POSTCARD FROM SENEGAL, CIRCA 1910.



# Cultural historian Rebecca Messbarger brings an 18th-century anatomical sculptor back to life.

BY BROOKE E. O'NEILL, AM'04

## THE WOMAN IN WAX

**HISTORIAN REBECCA MESSBARGER** had been wandering Bologna for hours, searching for a treasure few Italians knew existed. Before her stood an austere building guarded by a heavy iron fence. Could this be the place?

She ducked inside and spotted a porter's office.

Empty.

She continued down the corridor.

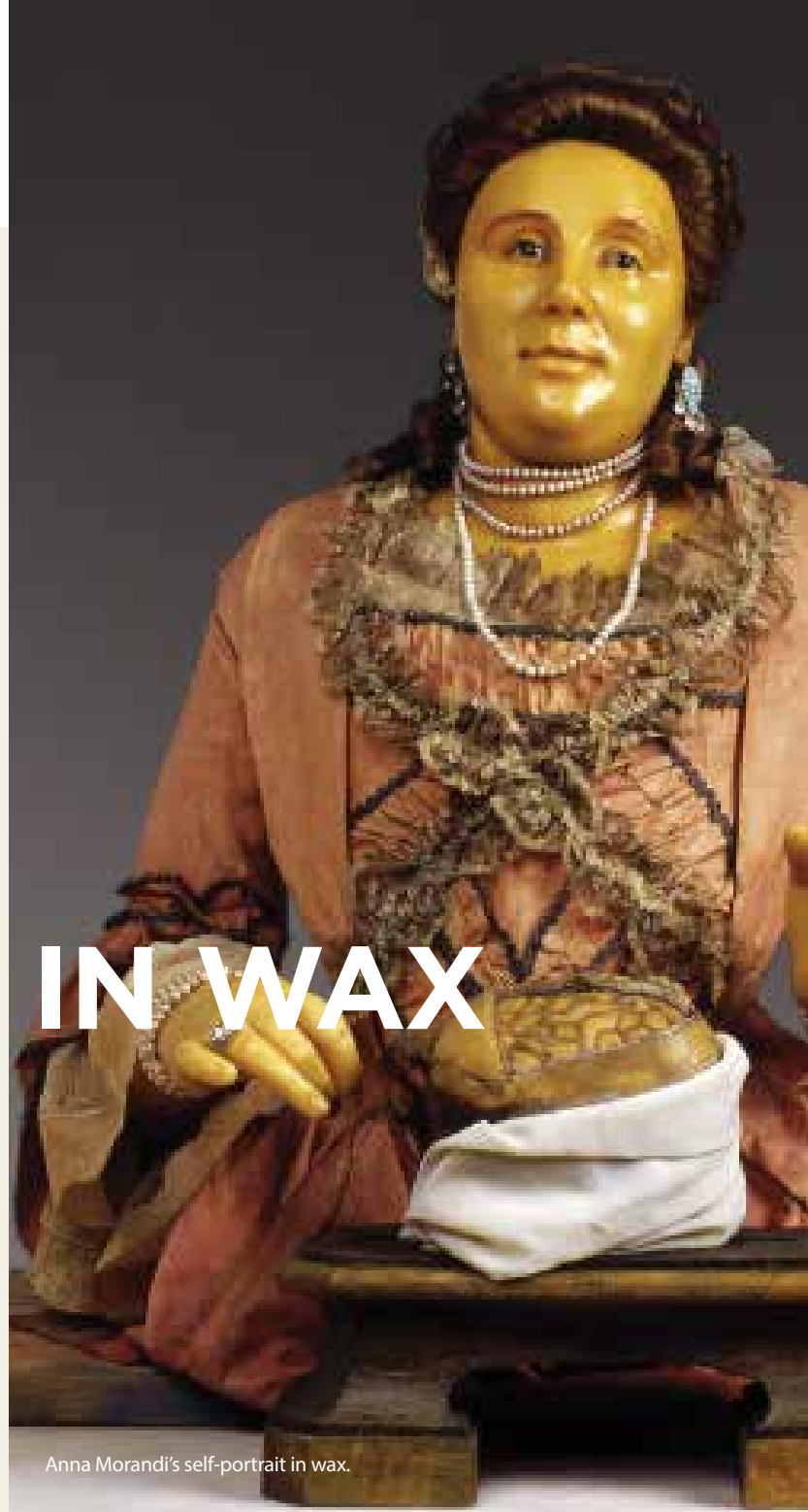
Deserted.

Feeling more like an intruder than a researcher, Messbarger, PhD'94, tiptoed upstairs and peered down a long hallway. Finally, a discovery.

Floor-to-ceiling glass cases lined the room. Inside each stood a life-size wax figure, the skin omitted to reveal a crisscross of muscle and sinew. One model covered his eyes. Another seemed to gaze across the horizon. Known as *écorchés*—flayed men—the models had been part of the pope's anatomy museum in the eighteenth century. Now they were neglected curiosities, languishing in an empty hallway at the University of Bologna's Institute of Human Anatomy.

But they were not the main reason she'd come. Walking past the models, she spied a gold plaque above the far doorway. Its Latin inscription bore the name she'd been looking for: Signora Manzolini.

Inside the room sat a replica of Anna Morandi Manzolini—created in wax. An anatomical modeler during the Italian Enlightenment, she had been celebrated for her exacting sculptures of human organs and systems. Intended as scientific training tools, her pieces were based on real bodies obtained



Anna Morandi's self-portrait in wax.

from the city morgue. During her lifetime (1714–74) crowds of physicians, medical students, and the curious would gather in her home to watch her anatomical demonstrations.

Sadly, the signora had not aged well. Marooned in the neglected museum, her self-portrait bust wore a tattered dress and brown wig placed haphazardly on her head. Straw filling poked out her back. Below her cracked fingers rested the likeness of a human brain, ready for dissecting.

Once admired by Pope Benedict XIV and Russia's Catherine the Great, the modeler had been all but forgotten. As Messbarger stared at the decaying remnants, she vowed to put Anna Morandi back on the map.

"I'm looking at this thinking, 'This is so fantastic,' but no one really knew about it," recalls Messbarger, who first discovered



Morandi while doing dissertation research on women’s intellectual authority during the Italian Enlightenment. “There are these very strange female biographical resources from the nineteenth century with lists of women and a couple sentences about their contributions. I kept running across her name.” Messbarger, now a professor of Italian as well as women, gender, and sexuality studies at Washington University in St. Louis, reintroduced the sculptor to the world with *The Lady Anatomist: The Life and Work of Anna Morandi Manzolini* (University of Chicago Press, 2010).

Messbarger unraveled the riveting story of an innovative female scientist underappreciated even in her own time. Trained as an artist, Morandi spent a decade doing dissections and anatomical modeling with her husband, Giovanni Manzolini. They sculpted teaching pieces for Bologna’s first obstetrics school and for academies throughout Europe. When Giovanni died in 1755, she continued their work and became a lecturer at the University of Bologna.

Despite her accomplishments, says Messbarger, Morandi was often seen as a “savant” rather than a scientist with serious preparation. Contemporary biographical accounts cast her as a “female improviser” and assumed she was merely her husband’s assistant.

“None of that was true,” says Messbarger, who mined Morandi’s detailed notebooks and eyewitness accounts of dissections to debunk the myths. Well versed in anatomy and medicine, Morandi led the couple’s public demonstrations, educating audiences about the human skeleton, sensory organs, and even male and female reproductive systems.

Even as she gained international recognition—she received commissions from the Royal Society of London and Catherine the Great tried to recruit her to move to Russia—Morandi remained marginalized in her native Bologna. The city’s conservative Clementina Academy of Art believed the rawness of wax anatomical figures debased the noble depiction of the nude. Caught between the worlds of artist and scientist, she won acceptance in neither.

It wasn’t until her husband’s death that financial pressures prompted Morandi to request a stipend from Pope Benedict XIV



Wax and bone figures by Ercole Lelli, Morandi, and Giovanni Manzolini.

that would allow her to continue as a public modeler. Recognizing her value to his native city, he arranged for her to receive 300 lire annually and an honorary membership in the art academy.

“He was a great supporter of select women intellectuals,” says Messbarger, who is now coediting the first English-language volume about Benedict XIV. A church reformer and patron of modern anatomical science, he was a central Enlightenment figure who, like Morandi, has been largely neglected. The project pulls together scholarship in medicine, religious studies, art history, and women’s studies, and has ambitious aims. “We’re really hoping that this work changes eighteenth-century studies,” she says, by raising the profile of this central figure.

Messbarger’s interest in the role of female intellectuals—and those who encourage them—is a personal one that goes back to her days at UChicago. “The fact that there were two women, Rebecca West and Elissa Weaver, among the leaders of the Romance Languages and Literatures department was important to me,” she says. Coming from a master’s program elsewhere with a nearly all-female student body and an all-male faculty, “I was ready to be mentored by women academic intellectuals.”

That training gave her the confidence to pursue her curiosity to eighteenth-century Bologna. “One of the things I found at Chicago that I had never found anywhere else was this instant acceptance of graduate students as future colleagues,” Messbarger says. “Your creativity as a scholar was highly valued.”

The signora would have approved.

**READ AN EXCERPT** from *The Lady Anatomist* and see more photos at [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu).

PHOTOS COURTESY MUSEO DI PALAZZO POGGI, UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA; WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY PHOTO SERVICES/A&S MAGAZINE



Messbarger studied anatomy to better understand Morandi’s work.



# CLOSE READING

A tight-knit group of assistant professors contributes energy and expertise to the English department.

BY SUSIE ALLEN, AB'09

**MOST ENGLISH DEPARTMENTS LIKE TO THINK** of themselves as interdisciplinary. But for David Simon, “there’s something special” about the way that University of Chicago literary scholars cross boundaries.

“Interdisciplinarity is not an ideal. It’s just a fact,” says Simon, who studies dispassion in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British literature. “We’re constantly in conversation with people with very different expertise from our own.”

The research interests of the 13 assistant professors in UChicago’s Department of English Language and Literature span geography, history,

media, and methodology. Some, like graphic narrative expert Hillary Chute and digital media and video game scholar Patrick Jagoda, work in emerging subfields; others, like eighteenth-century experts Heather Keenleyside, AM’03, PhD’08, and Timothy Campbell, are building on the department’s long tradition of scholarship rooted in historical periods.

It’s an exciting time for the department, which has hired nine assistant professors in the past three years. “Fields are being defined and made, fields that other English departments are just starting to think about,” says new hire Sonali Thakkar, whose first book will focus on the memory of the Holocaust in postcolonial literature.

The group is united by an interest in “intellectual problems more than predefined categories,” says John Muse, who is at work on a book about theatrical brevity in the twentieth century. “That





"Ambidextrous" scholars in English. Front (left to right): Heather Keenleyside, Timothy Campbell, Sonali Thakkar, Richard So. Back: John Muse, Patrick Jagoda; Adrienne Brown, Christopher Taylor. Not pictured: Hillary Chute, Benjamin Morgan, Srikanth Reddy, Jennifer Scappettone, David Simon.

generates a lot of exciting cross-fertilization of people from different periods talking to one another and to people across the University."

Chair and professor Elaine Hadley says the department has deliberately sought such "ambidextrous" scholars. The department is increasingly alert to changes in the discipline, such as a growing emphasis on transnational literature and "a more capacious sense of genre." Yet Hadley also thinks the department's overarching goal remains unchanged. Whether the object of study is a video game or a Victorian novel, she says, "Our field has always [tried to] interpret cultural and aesthetic production."

**BOTH JAGODA AND CHUTE**, whose objects of study lie somewhat outside the mainstream, say their work is rooted in the same kind of analysis that literary scholars have applied to more traditional texts. "With video games, 'close

play' is just as important as close reading," says Jagoda. "You don't know whether a game is working or how it's working until you've picked up a controller or put your fingers on the keyboard."

"A lot of people don't know how to close read an image," echoes Chute, a Neubauer Family assistant professor who studies comics. She urges her students "to think about what affects them about the image and why—to look and then look again. Part of what I'm hoping to call attention to is how the comics page is trying to make a reader slow down."

For Campbell, the continued emphasis on careful scholarship grounded in primary sources is a hallmark of the department. "[There's] a kind of faithfulness to the actual objects out there in the world that we're trying to explain," he says.

Along with studying new genres and forms, junior faculty members are developing new modes of research. Richard So is at work on a collaborative digital humanities project that explores connections among modernist poets in China, Japan, and the United States. His first book will examine a community of Chinese and American writers and intellectuals that included Pearl S. Buck. Reliance on new technology doesn't fundamentally change his scholarship, he says: "It's just a way of telling the same stories [on a] much more massive empirical scale."

Christopher Taylor shares So's interest in global literary communities. Taylor's research examines how literature helped nineteenth-century British West Indians to imagine their relationship to their imperial power. "It provided a means of trying to produce [imaginative] and actual new kinds of communities," he explains.

**ONE BENEFIT OF HAVING** such an energetic group of young faculty, says Hadley, is that they're willing to spread their intellectual energies and imagination across the University. Chute and Jagoda have organized events with

the Richard and Mary L. Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry, while Thakkar has helped to develop and will teach a new Core course, Gender and Sexuality in World Civilizations.

Srikanth Reddy and Jennifer Scappettone, practicing poets who teach in the Creative Writing program, also do critical work on poetry. Balancing that work can be challenging, but "it's a necessary difficulty," says Reddy, who completed his second book of poetry, *Voyager*, in 2011. "You have to keep studying the art to keep growing as a writer."

Scappettone thinks the benefit of joining creative and critical work flows both ways. Many literary texts that made their way into her book on modernism in Venice "were works that I encountered in discussion with my fellow poets," she says. "They weren't necessarily works that were being taught in university settings."

Many of the assistant professors say their most important resource is each other. Adrienne Brown, who studies representation of the skyscraper in American literature, says that her colleagues are not only smart: "They're curious. They want to know what people are doing across different fields."

Lunches, coffees, and dinners are regular events among the tight-knit group, says Benjamin Morgan, an expert on Victorian literature, science, and aesthetics. Their closeness caught the attention of a recent job candidate. "We were having drinks," Morgan says, "and she said, 'Wow, you guys really seem to like each other.'"

Adds Keenleyside, "It's a cheerful time. People are quite excited to be in a moment of tradition and innovation at once."

**READ MORE** about faculty members' backgrounds, research, and teaching at [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu).

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON SMITH

"Fields are being defined and made, fields that other English departments are just starting to think about."

—Sonali Thakkar

Want to work in book publishing? Humanities alumni offer advice.

BY ELIZABETH STATION

# PUBLISH & FLOURISH

**ENTERING A SHIFTING, COMPETITIVE INDUSTRY** at different moments and with different preparation, few alumni have identical stories about how they broke into book publishing. Ellen Grafton, AM'11, a graduate of the Master of Arts Program in the Humanities (MAPH), began her job search during the recession. "I definitely sent out a lot of résumés and job applications that got no response," she says.

Before MAPH, Grafton worked as an audiobook narrator and a technical writer; after graduation, she contacted a high school friend at Simon and Schuster who encouraged her to apply for a position there. Now assistant managing editor in the company's children's division in New York, she helps "keep track of many moving targets" on projects from toddlers' board books to teen novels.

When Lindsay Waters, AM'70, PhD'76 (English), finished his doctorate, he took back-to-back, one-year teaching jobs but wished for more stable employment. While at the University of Minnesota he learned about an editorial opening at its press. "It looked, when I first got it, like an admission of total defeat," he says. "I have failed to get a teaching job," he remembers thinking, "and now I'm essentially going to be a glorified secretary for faculty members, trying to help them get their books published."

Thirty-five years later Waters is executive editor for the humanities at Harvard University Press. He acquires manuscripts in philosophy; literary, cultural, and Asian studies; pop culture; "and conflicting relations among peoples in the United States and around the world." Waters's 2004 book, *Enemies of Promise*, laments the decline

and commercialization of academic publishing. Yet over a long career he's explored a vast range of topics and helped bring important ideas to light. "If you want to be an intellectual," he says, "it's the best thing to do."

His UChicago education began that intellectual life. "My graduate training gave me a sense of what were growth areas in the humanities," Waters says. "I was a PhD student when literary theory was exploding in Europe and not yet big in the United States. There was a big lack on the American publishing scene. I worked in the most concerted way to fill it."

Grafton, on the other hand, doesn't use her graduate training every day. "A lot of what I studied specifically in MAPH, contentwise, does not apply at all to my job," she says. "I did my thesis on spatial representation of duality in *The Changeling*. I am still very happy that I had a year of the mind, but I don't apply my knowledge

of the minutiae of Renaissance theater to my job.” Even so, she says, “Learning to express your ideas clearly and still retain a level of complexity is important.”

Another New York-based MAPH alum, Allison Wright, AM’08, is the US dictionaries editor at Oxford University Press. She provides editorial support for the New Oxford American Dictionary and is responsible for corrections both in print and online. In 2012 she helped with the publication of the third edition of the Oxford American Writer’s Thesaurus.

Wright got her first glimpse of commercial publishing as an undergraduate linguistics major, when she landed a summer internship writing copy for Scholastic’s grade school math magazines. It was 2005, so she also got a ring-side seat when the company launched the sixth Harry Potter book. To learn about the industry, she later took Columbia Journalism School’s six-week summer publishing course.

Tim McGovern, AB’99, AM’01, transitioned from a PhD program in Classics to his current job as an editorial associate at the University of Chicago Press. “A few aspects of publishing track closely with grad school; the biggest is making a quick and accurate evaluation of a work,” he says. “You’re also doing a lot of rewriting, presenting manuscripts to different audiences—fellow editors, the faculty board, the sales and marketing staff.”

After school, the focus expands. “No matter where in publishing you’re working, you’re going to have between five and fifty projects in different stages of activity,” says McGovern. “Being willing

“Sure, there’s highbrow literary fiction; there’s also *Fifty Shades of Grey* and everything in between.” —Joanna MacKenzie

to jump into a new field at the deep end is fairly key.” McGovern should know. He studied the ancient Mediterranean world as a graduate student; at the Press, he acquires titles in history, sociology, rhetoric, sex, and jazz.

The intensity of a one-year program such as MAPH—its opportunities and requirements—forces students to become efficient multitaskers, says Joanna MacKenzie, AM’02. MacKenzie is an agent at Browne and Miller Literary Associates, a Chicago agency that represents fiction and nonfiction authors. With her support the company has hired a MAPH intern annually since 2005, including Wright. That preparation has helped many embark on careers in publishing.

MacKenzie urges job hunters to read widely. “Sure, there’s highbrow literary fiction; there’s also *Fifty Shades of Grey* and everything in between,” she says. “If you are trying to break into publishing you have to be aware of all the different kinds of books being published that are currently successful, because at the end of the day it is a business, and editors are looking for money-making opportunities.”

Internships and summer publishing courses are valuable. So is hands-on experience, from buying used books for a local store to managing content for a website. “Learn about the nuts

and bolts of things,” says Waters. Both Wright and McGovern worked part time at the University of Chicago Press while doing course work; McGovern held jobs at two Hyde Park bookstores.

Wright’s job exposed her to the business and manufacturing “of actual, physical books—the paper being used, the costs that are incurred. It’s not just about words on a page and ideas; it’s about chains that operate in order to create products.” Job seekers should also study the industry online, she says, so potential employers know you’re familiar with the territory. “Any publisher has a press page where they announce major initiatives, like if they’re folding an imprint or merging companies.”

A final tip: be willing to talk to anyone, in any sector, about a job, says Grafton. If you’re shy, “maybe you don’t go to the big networking mixers, but you have coffee, one-on-one, with the friend of a friend. Personal skills are important in almost any part of the publishing business.”

**READ MORE** advice from alumni and learn about some of their favorite publishing projects at [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu).

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS KIRZEDER AND ROB KOZLOFF



As a student, McGovern bought and sold used books at O’Gara and Wilson in Hyde Park.

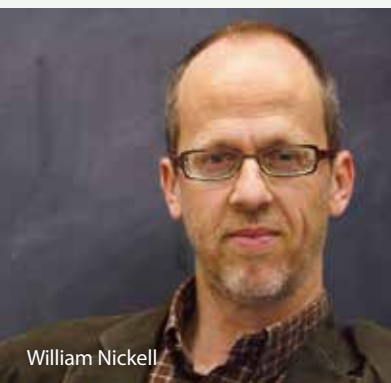


# WHY READ *War and Peace*?

A literary scholar brings Tolstoy  
(back) to the masses.

**THERE ARE NOVELS.** There are long Russian novels. And then there's *War and Peace*. The book's complexity and prodigious length—more than 1,200 pages even without the extensive endnotes—have given it a reputation as a literary crucible. But Tolstoy's saga, originally published in serial form in 1865, is a page-turner with the long arc, well-wrought storytelling, and complex humor of the best HBO miniseries.

William Nickell, assistant professor in Slavic Languages and Literatures, is hoping to convert more readers into lovers of Tolstoy. His forthcoming companion to *War and Peace* aims to make the novel more accessible for modern audiences. He shared some of the reasons behind this campaign with Courtney C. W. Guerra, AB'05, who asked, "Why read *War and Peace*?"



William Nickell

■ **Because it is not a "classic novel."**

Like other works often thrown into this category, *War and Peace* is hardly conventional, and is not even easy to categorize. Tolstoy himself explained: "It is not a novel, still less an epic poem, still less a historical chronicle. *War and Peace* is what the author wanted and was able to express, in the form in which it is expressed." Readers will be surprised by the book's modern devices: stream of consciousness, cinematic point of view, shifting narrative voices. The great twentieth-century Russian author Isaac Babel said that when he read Tolstoy, he felt as if the world was writing itself.

■ **Because it asks big questions in little ways.**

Tolstoy describes the Russian army's use of guerrilla warfare, which broke then-conventional forms of battle, in which large forces that represented competing nations or alliances met in direct and ordered confrontation. His novel is built on the same principles, attacking big ideas with new strategies, broaching philosophical questions in boudoirs and social crises in salons. It opens as a confrontation with France approaches but delves into battles on the home front—arguments at a soiree, competition among young men, a struggle over a will—each reflecting elements that have led to the impending war with Napoleon.

■ **Because it is "golden."**

*War and Peace* is a product of the golden age in Russian realism, when authors figured out that they could paint a larger canvas, incorporate more diverse narrative structures, and simply do things that had never been done before. Readers began to view writers as spiritual fathers and authors of national narratives, and believed that literature could, and would, change the world.

■ **Because it is entertaining.**

Tolstoy wrote *War and Peace* during a period when he was reading English sensation novels, full of theft, murder, and seduction, but also adultery, bigamy, insanity, and incest. He was also learning from peasant children. In a famous essay describing his experience teaching writing in a village schoolhouse, he regretted corrupting the children's talents with his Europeanized sensibility; left to their own devices, they could relate stories with the pithy vitality of folktales. Tolstoy brought this spirit of oral tradition into his novel, and later told Maxim Gorky, "Without false modesty, it is like the Iliad."

■ **Because it tells a great story.**

*War and Peace* is epic in scope as well as tone, relating a tale that still staggers the imagination. Napoleon entered Russia with an army of 600,000 and left with only a tenth of that number. But if the idea of a long war narrative is unappealing, know that a far greater portion of the text is devoted to the "peace" episodes, and that both sides of this divide feature some of the most memorable characters and scenes in all of literature.

■ **Because it is a literary mecca.**

When I tell people of my project I find myself receiving, as if in a confessional, progress reports on this pilgrimage, ranging from, "Oh, I really would like to read it, but I'm intimidated," to, "Oh, I read that—it was wonderful!" The first goal of my book is not to offer a major new interpretation, but instead to help readers move from the first category to the second.

TOLSTOY IMAGE FROM FOTOLIA; PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILLIAM BLACKHURST

**FOR MORE REASONS** to read *War and Peace* and recommendations on choosing a translation, visit [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu).

# COME TOGETHER

A new online magazine revives the spirit of grad school.



**WHEN A GROUP** of recent graduates from the Master of Arts Program in the Humanities (MAPH) launched *Colloquium*, an online journal, they admitted it was a bit of a lark. The first issue went live in October 2012, featuring critical essays, fiction, video, poetry, and photography by a dozen program alumni.

Enthusiastic reviews and a solid stream of virtual visitors encouraged the founders to follow through on their plans to publish a second installment this spring. Submissions flowed in, and the journal's editors and contributors accepted an invitation to host a panel about *Colloquium* at Alumni Weekend (see back cover). "There's an appetite for what we're trying to do," says coeditor Bill Hutchison, AM'12. "All of a sudden, it's a thing."

When students in the humanities leave the University, it can mean leaving behind an intensely engaging intellectual environment. *Colloquium* sprang from a desire to find a venue where MAPH alumni could continue creating and discussing their work. Published each fall and spring, the journal showcases interdisciplinary writing as well as music, videos, photography, and other projects. A seven-member editorial board selects, edits, and posts pieces by contributors with some relation, past or present, to MAPH.

*Colloquium*'s inaugural issue had a close-to-home theme—the city of Chicago—and its lively launch party at the Logan Center for the Arts showed that local graduates are eager to reconnect. Looking ahead, the editors want to knit together readers and contributors from MAPH's 1,500 alumni around the country.

Two founders, Hutchison and Liz John, AM'12, will start PhD programs in literature next fall, but they plan to stay involved with the magazine. "However spread out an intellectual community gets," says Hutchison, "there's still always this motivating urge to 'speak together'—to keep investigating and adventuring around whatever this weird business of being might be."—E. S.

**READ THE JOURNAL** at [colloquium.uchicago.edu](http://colloquium.uchicago.edu).

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEFANIE ETOW, AM'12

## HOUSE, HOME, HUB

Creative Writing takes up residence at Taft House.

**AS PAINTERS**, filmmakers, musicians, and actors settled into the sleek new Logan Center for the Arts this past fall, the Committee on Creative Writing unpacked its boxes in Taft House, a three-story red-brick Victorian half a block away.

Previously, Creative Writing was dispersed around campus: the full-time lecturers had offices in Gates-Blake, the program chair and staff worked in Walker, and classes were scattered around campus.

Now the program has a renovated, quirky home south of the Midway at a house named for Lorado Taft (1860–1936), sculptor and University lecturer. The location holds faculty and administrative offices, a conference room, and space for the *Chicago Review* and student journals. Oddly shaped nooks invite students to sit, read, and write; there's a lounge with a coffee-pot and a fireplace in the foyer. Writing classes

happen at Taft House and the adjoining Midway Studios—which boasts new skylights and other upgrades—or across the courtyard at the Logan Center.

Creative Writing offers 45 courses and co-sponsors, along with the Poem Present series, about 50 events a year from workshops to student readings to writers' visits. In February essayist Tom Bissell drew a crowd to a reading from his forthcoming book. The event was made possible by the Claire and Emmett Dedmon Visiting Creative Writers Program, which annually brings an established writer to explore interdisciplinary aspects of art. Novelist Jeffrey Eugenides will come to campus in May 2013 as Kestnbaum Writer in Residence; the program also has sponsored visits by Michael Ondaatje, Joyce Carol Oates, and Jhumpa Lahiri.

Like other arts programs at UChicago, Creative



Writing is committed to wedding theory and practice. Classes provide time to "workshop" student writing while immersing students in literary theory, close reading of established authors, and research. Faculty are excited about the synergies possible now that writers share a designated hub in close proximity to artists and scholars working in other media.

—Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON SMITH



Postcards with scenes of everyday Jewish life from UChicago's Harry and Branka Sondheim Jewish Heritage Collection.



# “THE ONLY CURE FOR ANTI-ANYTHING”

A visiting professorship builds on strengths in Jewish studies.

**IN THE EARLY 1980S** Joyce Zeger Greenberg, AB'52, and her late husband, Jacob Greenberg, traveled to Kaifeng, China, where a small community of Jews had lived since at least 960 CE. “It was very sad,” Greenberg recalls. “A Jewish community had lived there and been accepted for hundreds of years. And there was just nothing left. There was one stele in a museum. There was a street whose name translated as the Street of the Plucked Sinew [a reference to traditional Jewish butchering practices]. And that was it.” The experience so affected her that Greenberg began supporting the preservation of important Jewish sites through the Jewish Heritage Grant Program of the World Monuments Fund.

More recently Greenberg was concerned about reports of anti-Semitic and anti-Israel sentiment and the lack of informed debate on American college campuses. So last fall she made a \$2 million gift to establish the Joyce Zeger Greenberg Visiting Professorship in Jewish Studies, which will enhance the ability of the University of Chicago to bring senior scholars to campus through the auspices of the Chicago Center for Jewish Studies. “The only cure for anti-anything is education,” she says.

“There are seven billion people in the world. There are 1.2 billion Muslims, 1.2 billion Catholics. But there are just 13 million Jews. We’re such a small minority.

That’s one reason I’m so interested in Jewish history and heritage.”

Josef Stern, director of the Center for Jewish Studies and the William H. Colvin Professor of Philosophy, says the endowed visiting professorship “will enable us to bring in distinguished scholars in areas where we have no regular faculty,” such as rabbinics, law and religion, American Jewish history, Sephardic studies, Eastern European Judaism, and the history of Jews in the Islamic world.

In areas where the University does have regular faculty—modern Jewish history, modern Hebrew literature, the Bible, and music, for example—a visiting professor “will help us expand our offerings,” Stern says, allowing students to “hear another voice.”

The center, which brings together faculty and students from the Divisions of the Humanities and Social Sciences as well as the Divinity School, Law School, and the Library, was created only four years ago, but it builds on a tradition of scholarship that dates to the University’s founding. UChicago’s first president, William Rainey Harper, was a Hebrew Bible scholar, and early faculty member Emil Gustav Hirsch was a professor of rabbinical literature and philosophy who also headed the Chicago Sinai Congregation.

Today there are 30 faculty and 90 graduate students engaged in scholarship with impact on the field of Jewish

“We’re such a small minority. That’s one reason I’m so interested in Jewish history and heritage.”—Joyce Zeger Greenberg, AB’52



## RICHARD STERN

1928 - 2013

**HE PUBLISHED** more than 20 books in his lifetime, but Richard Stern—author of novels, short stories, and essays—insisted he was never a driven writer. “I’ve never needed to write,” he explained in 2010. “I wrote because I wanted to.”

Stern, the Helen A. Regenstein Professor Emeritus in English Language and Literature, died January 24 at his home on Tybee Island, Georgia. He was 84.

Over his career Stern crossed paths with many leading literary figures of his generation, including his friends Saul Bellow, X’39, and Philip Roth, AM’55. Known as a writer’s writer, his fans included Bellow, Roth, Norman Mailer, Bernard Malamud, and Flannery O’Connor. “Every writer in America read and admired him,” Roth told the *New York Times*. Yet a reviewer once called Stern “the best American author of whom you have never heard.”

Born in 1928 in New York City, Stern earned degrees at the University of North Carolina, Harvard, and the University of Iowa. In 1955 he joined the UChicago faculty, where he earned a reputation as a demanding but devoted teacher of American literature and creative writing.

“He was well liked, admired, and loved by the talented people he worked with,” said David Bevington, the Phyllis Fay Horton Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus in English. Stern developed a close friendship with Norman Maclean, PhD’40, and Roth credits Stern with giving him the idea for the novella *Goodbye, Columbus*. Stern “got a kick out of the stories” of Roth’s *New Jersey* upbringing, Roth told the *Chicago Tribune* in 1983. “Why don’t you write that down?” he said.

Stern brought distinguished writers to campus to discuss their work and offer guidance to students; he recalled their visits in the 2010 collection *Still On Call*. Over 46 years at the University, he forged an attachment to Hyde Park and Chicago. “There’s something great and complicated about this city that’s different from any place I’ve ever lived,” Stern said in 2006. “The University is in the bloodstream of this city and vice versa.”

Stern’s fiction often featured intellectuals; his best-known novel, *Other Men’s Daughters* (1973), describes an affair between a middle-aged professor and his young student. He launched his career with the novel *Golk* (1960); his debut drew comparisons to Nabokov and Bellow and praise from Joan Didion and Mailer. Other novels include *Stitch* (1965), *Natural Shocks* (1978), and *A Father’s Words* (1986). He wrote the short story collections *The Books in Fred Hampton’s Apartment* (1973), *Packages* (1980), *Noble Rot* (1988), and *Almonds to Zooof* (2005).

Stern received the Award of Merit from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters in 1985, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Heartland Prize.

He is survived by his wife, poet Alane Rollings, AB’72, AM’75; four children from his first marriage, Christopher, Andrew, Nicholas, and Kate; and five grandchildren.

A memorial service is planned for November 8 at 3 p.m. in Bond Chapel on the University of Chicago campus.—S. A.

**READ TRIBUTES**, interviews, and more at [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu).

PHOTO COURTESY ANDREW STERN



studies, spanning several schools and departments. The University offers teaching programs in biblical and modern Hebrew, Yiddish, and Judeo-Arabic, as well as in all the modern languages in which Jewish texts are written. The center has organized conferences on topics from the state of American Jewish belief to Israelite archaeology. With the Special Collections Research Center, it sponsored a May 2012 exhibition and lecture series on the Haggadah, a book of prayers and stories recited on Passover. The show was drawn entirely from the collection of Stephen P. Durchslag, a retired lawyer and current student in Jewish studies, whose collection of Haggadot is believed to be the largest in private hands.

Greenberg’s visiting professorship is just one effort to cultivate education about Judaism in Chicago and around the world. Stern organized a conference, “Maimonides and Medieval Jewish Thought,” at the UChicago Center in Beijing last year. It was so successful that he is planning another event in China: a conference on comparative Jewish and Chinese ethics, cosponsored by the Center for Judaic Studies at Shandong University.

In China, Stern notes, Jewish studies is a small but growing field—and an entirely academic interest for its scholars, none of whom are Jewish or interested in religious questions from a personal standpoint. “The students are really impressive—very bright, extremely hard working, really competitive,” he says. “By Chinese standards, the number of students is a drop in the bucket. But it will grow.”—C. G.

IMAGES COURTESY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS RESEARCH CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LIBRARY; MICHAEL BACKMAN LTD, LONDON

Below: Jews reading Torah scrolls in Kaifeng, China, circa 1910.



Read Tableau online—including exclusive web-only stories and photos—at [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu).



# RECONNECT WITH THE HUMANITIES

## alumniweekend June 6–9, 2013

### FRIDAY, JUNE 7

1:30–2:30 p.m.

**Rebirth of a Museum:  
The Oriental Institute  
Partnership with  
the National Museum  
of Afghanistan**

*UnCommon Core*  
Session with  
Gil Stein

3:00–4:00 p.m.

**Qur'anic Studies  
in a Turbulent  
Today**

*UnCommon Core*  
Session with  
Michael Sells

### SATURDAY, JUNE 8

11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

**Alumni Awards Ceremony**

Eva Fishell Lichtenberg,  
LAB'49, AB'52, AM'55, PhD'60, and  
Nancy Parra, AM'66, PhD'73, will  
be honored with other award  
recipients in Rockefeller  
Memorial Chapel.

4:00–5:00 p.m.

**The Humanities  
beyond the Academy:  
A Colloquium on  
*Colloquium***

*UnCommon Core* Session  
on a new online journal  
founded by recent graduates  
of the Master of Arts  
Program in the Humanities

(SEE STORY ON PAGE 11.)

**JOIN US!** The weekend's four days of UChicago-style fun also will include tours, museum access, social events, and other *UnCommon Core* sessions. Alumni from all degree programs and class years are welcome to attend with family and friends; many events are free.

TO REGISTER AND LEARN MORE, VISIT [ALUMNIWEEKEND.UCHICAGO.EDU](http://ALUMNIWEEKEND.UCHICAGO.EDU) OR CALL 800.955.0065.

**SAVE THE DATE** | Visit the University of Chicago on Saturday, October 19, 2013, for the 35th annual Humanities Day. If you are currently on the mailing list of the Division of the Humanities, you will be notified via e-mail when registration opens in early August. Visit [humanitiesday.uchicago.edu](http://humanitiesday.uchicago.edu) for information about the keynote address and additional sessions. All events are free and open to the public. We look forward to seeing you on campus!