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See page 5 for news on the number of positions advertised in the 2011–12 *Job Information List*.



The new wing of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop

2013 MLA Delegate Assembly Meeting

MLA members are invited to attend the meeting of the 2013 Delegate Assembly during the convention in Boston. Members may speak to any of the items on the assembly's agenda. These items include regular staff and committee reports on association activities, a proposed constitutional amendment, and new proposals submitted by members for the assembly's consideration. Any new proposals received will be posted at the MLA Web site in early December (see the Delegate Assembly's page, www.mla.org/delegate_assembly) and will be printed in the first issue of the *Convention Daily*, available online before the convention and on-site in Boston.

The assembly meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, 5 January, in the Grand Ballroom of the Boston Sheraton. Because the assembly meeting is open-ended, even latecomers will have a chance to join in important discussions of association policies.

Elections Committee Seeks Candidates

The MLA Elections Committee will meet on 1 February 2013 to begin the process of identifying candidates for seventeen special-interest and thirty-eight regional Delegate Assembly seats. Those elected in 2013 will serve in the assembly from 13 January 2014 through the close of the January 2017 convention and must attend the meetings of the assembly in January 2015, January 2016, and January 2017.

The Elections Committee is charged not only with nominating candidates and overseeing the elections but also with ensuring that the various groups within the MLA find representation in the Delegate Assembly. Committee members are therefore interested in hearing from all MLA members who are willing to be candidates in next year's Delegate Assembly elections. Members who would like to be considered should write to the Elections Committee, c/o Carol Zuses, at the MLA office (czuses@mla.org).



What Is the MLA, and Where Does It Live?

A funny thing happened to me back in January. I checked in to my hotel for the New Faculty Majority conference in Washington, DC, and the young man at the desk asked me if I was really from the Modern Language Association. “Yes, I am,” I replied. “In fact, I’m the president of the association this year.” “Wow,” he replied. “You mean the Modern Language Association that does the *Handbook* for research papers?” “I do,” I said, stunned, “but I have to admit I don’t have any jurisdiction over the *Handbook*.”

I was totally charmed by this encounter. I know that the *Handbook* has sold millions of copies and that MLA style is widely known, but I have never met anyone who heard “MLA” and

immediately thought, “Wow! The *Handbook* people!” In my experience, when people talk about the MLA—and by “people” I mean not only “journalists” and “folks” but also “other professors”—they tend to identify the association with the convention. I have always found the slippage rather strange, and I wonder whether the MLA is unique among scholarly societies in this respect. Outside academe, the conflation of the convention with the association is probably the result of years of tedious drive-by journalists filing their “let’s make fun of paper titles” columns over the holiday break; inside academe, the dynamic is more complex.

Over the past year, I have learned to my surprise that many of my colleagues—even many fellow members of the association—are under the impression that the convention is where the “real” work of the MLA gets done. Some people seem to think the convention is our major source of revenue (it is not). Yet because the convention is the venue for job interviews, it is the site of great (and often justified) anxiety. Because the convention can involve any number of potentially awkward face-to-face encounters, from the ride in the crowded elevator with the person who panned your last book to the tense moment in a session with an audience member whose question is really more of a (hostile) comment, it can be the site of whatever passes for high drama in the world of letters. And because the convention brings together eight thousand smart, literate people and hosts hundreds of gatherings of old friends, it can sometimes be great fun.

But the convention is not the association. The *Handbook* is not the association—and neither is the *MLA Bibliography*, which *is* our major source of revenue! Even the MLA staff members, brilliant and dedicated as they are, are not the association. Neither is any one instantiation of the Delegate Assembly or the Executive Council. The truism you’re expecting (and that I will not fail to deliver) happens to be true: *you* are the association.

As Burton Bledstein points out in *The Culture of Professionalism*, disciplinary associations like the MLA were formed at a time when the United States was undergoing the transformations that led to the creation of what we now call the professional-managerial class. They offered their members an identity *as* professionals and a venue for intellectual exchange among specialists in various branches of knowledge. Do we still need such things today? Many of our colleagues choose to affiliate instead with smaller, subdisciplinary organizations;

some choose not to affiliate with any scholarly organization at all. But for those of you who happen to be reading this newsletter . . . what do you see as the purpose of your organization?

I can assure you that the Executive Council debates versions of this question at our every meeting; the most visible and dramatic result of one of those discussions was the creation of the office of scholarly communication, and my successor, Marianne Hirsch, has convened a working group to reexamine the MLA’s division structure, an ambitious undertaking that will concern us for some time. But ideas about our purpose subtend every discussion we have about whether we should take a public stand on an issue and every deliberation about how we should work with other organizations on matters that affect us all.

In the course of those discussions, I have come to realize that one critical aspect of the MLA is often overlooked even by our members: our standing committees. Everyone speaks of committee work as a ticket to tedium, but my experience on MLA committees has been terrific. I started out in 1997 as a member of the Committee on Disability Issues in the Profession and was thrilled to see how we were making our convention and our publications more accessible. As a member of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities, I worked on our academic freedom statement and debated our per-course wage recommendations with my colleagues. As a member of the Nominating Committee, I helped create a slate of candidates for the MLA’s highest offices. At times, the work was actually fun; always, it was instructive and edifying.

How can you get involved with the MLA at this important level? It’s easy: simply volunteer for a committee you’d like to

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work on. The Executive Council can't take all self-nominations, of course, but we try to give them priority—partly to get new people involved in the work of the association and partly because we're reasonably sure that self-nominated candidates will accept when we ask them to serve. You can help maintain or create our professional standards, oversee our publications, promote the interests of various constituencies, or shape new developments in information technology and scholarly communication. And on committees that meet face-to-face, you'll get to visit New York City.

So if you've been wondering how the MLA operates, and why it does the things it does, look past the convention: get involved at the committee level, where so much of our work takes place. Help set the agenda on the issues that mean the most to you as a scholar and teacher. And join the ongoing discussions about the role of scholarly societies in the twenty-first century.

Michael Bérubé

Work Cited

Bledstein, Burton J. *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America*. New York: Norton, 1978. Print.

Members are invited to comment on the president's column at www.mla.org/fromthepres.

Making Suggestions for Committee Appointments

This year the MLA Executive Council will make appointments to fifteen standing committees of the association. The council invites members to consider suggesting themselves or other members for one of the forty-seven anticipated vacancies on the fifteen committees. Members' suggestions will be accepted at the Web site (www.mla.org/commsugg) from mid-November through early February. The Web page for suggestions provides information on the factors relevant to this new round of committee appointments. Because these factors change from year to year, suggestions made the previous year are not brought forward for the council's consideration. Members will therefore need to deposit new or updated suggestions after consulting the new Web listing of vacancies.

The council will be making appointments to fill these vacancies at its February 2013 meeting. Any questions about committee suggestions should be addressed to Carol Zuses at the MLA office (czuses@mla.org).

Editor's Column



The Humanities: It's What We Do

I am always alert to news about MLA members, so I was pleased to read in September the announcement that Jean-Christophe Cloutier, a Columbia graduate student, had discovered an unpublished manuscript of a novel by the Harlem Renaissance writer Claude McKay. Cloutier and Brent Hayes Edwards, his adviser, authenticated the work through “themes that recurred across McKay's work, like Communism and labor strikes in Harlem, and characters, like the real-life labor leader Sufi Abdul Hamid” (Lee). Also in September, we learned that Angela R. Mace, a Duke graduate student, had solved the riddle of an *Easter* sonata often attributed to Felix Mendelssohn. Under the tutelage of her adviser, R. Larry Todd, Mace researched the history of

the piece, tracked down and inspected the manuscript, studied the handwriting, and demonstrated that Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, and not her more famous brother, was the composer.

Graduate students rarely hit “scholarly gold” in the way that these two humanities scholars did, and yet examples of major discoveries abound in areas other than the natural sciences. The field of archaeology may be said to hinge on encounters such as the one Hiram Bingham experienced when, during an Andean trek a century ago, some local people led him to Machu Picchu. Art historians continually update our knowledge of provenance, attribution, possession, and other factors concerning works of art as they are created and circulated across time. Many advances in the humanities don't emerge from the realm of manuscripts, monuments, or canvases, of course, and they don't usually make headlines in the *New York Times* (except perhaps in obituaries). I find myself asking, What if we did think about them as newsworthy? Imagine what

it would mean if the general public read about ideas in the humanities, told in understandable language and illustrated with enticing stories. So accustomed are we to defending our scholarship as discipline-specific, with its own vocabulary and audience, we rarely try to present it in any other terms.

What does it mean to “do the humanities”—in contrast to teaching, studying, or doing research in the humanities? I've heard a variety of voices on the subject recently, from digital humanists, who aspire to “more hack, less yack,” to scholars like Martha Nussbaum, who speak of “profitable skills,” to Neal Lester, director of Project Humanities at Arizona State University, who recently organized a forum that I introduced at the National Press Club on this issue. There is general agreement that the everyday practices involving the humanities could be rendered more visible (and potentially more valuable) by marking—and, yes, marketing—them with their country of origin (the imagination, the mind).

(cont. on p. 4)

(cont. from p. 3)

Remember New York State Governor Mario Cuomo's erudite and articulate answers to the call-in questions on his radio program? English major. How about "We Real Cool" poet Gwendolyn Brooks? Also an English major. Look around at college and university presidents, and you will note a large number of English, French, and German PhDs. The proverbial query "What will you do with that degree?" rarely gets answered with "Become the first woman astronaut in space," "Serve as Secretary of State," or "Be the journalist who uncovers Watergate." Yet in those instances, too, we find humanities majors making their mark.

We should keep telling our students (and their parents) that "doing the humanities" prepares them generally in a way no narrow occupational degree can; they can always pick up the specialized knowledge they need later. We should be teaching them to do hands-on research in the humanities in ways that engage them with others in the classroom, on the campus, in the community, and around the globe. Each one of us should be able to explain our teaching and research pursuits in compelling, clear language. We won't all boast a jaw-dropping original Fanny Mendelssohn or Claude McKay tale, but we all have an interesting story to tell. Because if we don't—if we are instead inducing somnolence in our students and in one another—then we're missing the lessons that humanities-doers have imparted.

I remember running down the stairs one day back in the 1980s, so excited I could hardly speak. I had figured out what Salvador Dalí's *Hallucinogenic Toreador* had to do with José Donoso's *El jardín de al lado*, in formal terms of the painting and the text and also in the psychoanalytic meanings of both works. I went on to publish quite a bit on the relation of the visual arts to literature, and a few years ago I received a message from a graduate student who came across my article on Donoso. That she found my decades-old work useful filled me with pleasure and won-

der, because I vividly recalled the joy of discovery when I was doing that research. When we say the word *research*, most people don't think of the humanities, and they have trouble recognizing the product as useful. It's true that "doing the humanities" doesn't produce scientific knowledge that can, say, cure cancer. But it can yield imaginative works on cancer like Susan Gubar's *Memoir of a Debulked Woman* and Mary Cappello's *Called Back: My Reply to Cancer, My Return to Life* that change people's lives. Can you tell your research and teaching stories with passion to a broad public? Will you? The best way to promote the humanities is through demonstration. To wit (I borrow here from Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life"): "Let us, then, be up and doing."

Rosemary G. Feal

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Members are invited to comment on this column at www.mla.org/fromtheeditor.

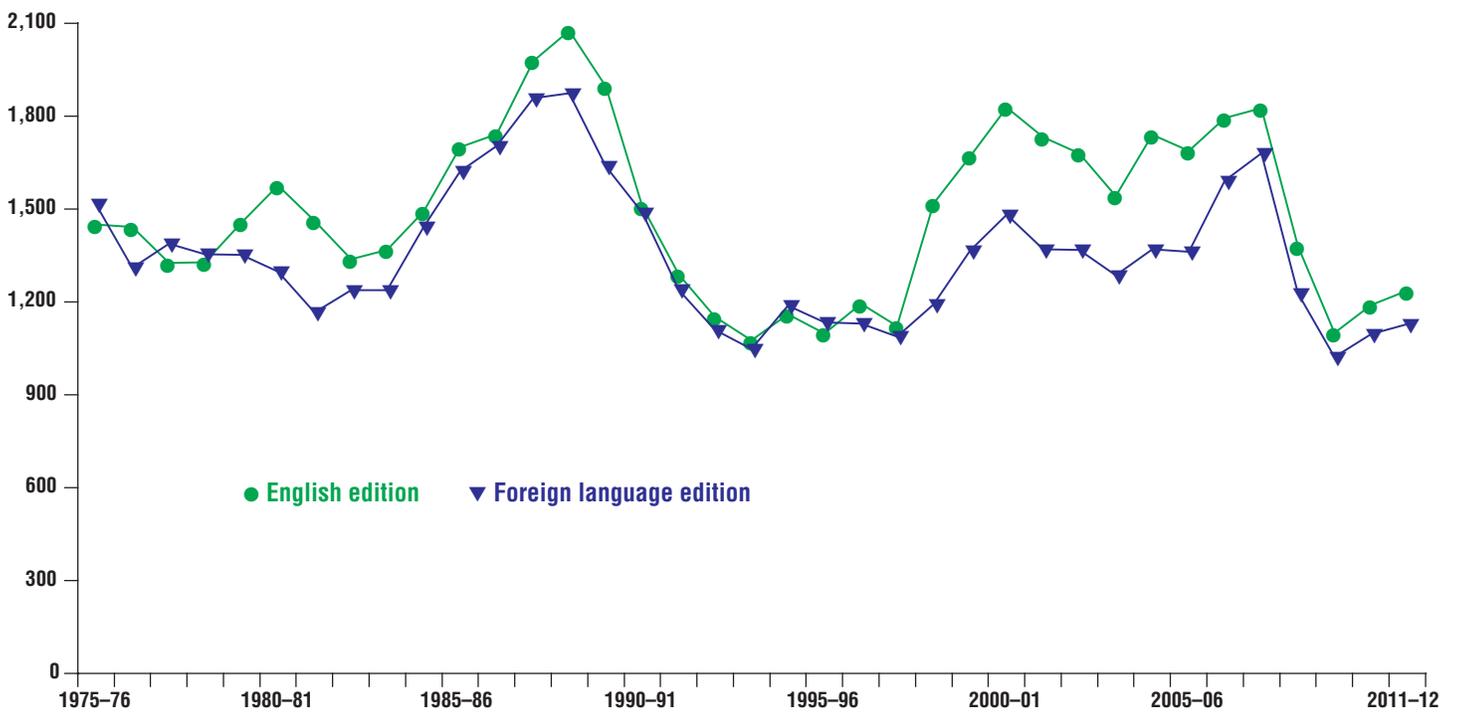


2013 ADE and ADFL Summer Seminars

Chairs, directors of graduate and undergraduate studies, heads of divisions, and other administrators and their designees from departments of English and other modern languages gather annually at the ADE and ADFL summer seminars. Seminar participants consult with colleagues; learn about new trends; hear from experienced leaders about responses to emerging challenges and opportunities in the discipline; gather strategies and perspectives to take back to their campuses; share lore, tips, and lessons learned to develop practical administrative know-how; and establish supportive networks of peers to call on throughout the year. The seminars are also an opportunity for department chairs to contribute their individual voices and expertise to the development of ADE, ADFL, and MLA reports, statistical analyses, and statements of best practice.

ADE-ADFL Seminar North, taking place in Pittsburgh from 6 to 9 June, will be hosted by the departments of language and literature at the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University. ADFL Seminar South will be hosted by Rice University from 18 to 21 June in Houston. ADE Seminar South will take place in Charlotte from 27 to 30 June and will be hosted by the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. Information about programs, registration, and accommodations will be announced at the ADE and ADFL Web sites (www.ade.org and www.adfl.org) and in brochures that will be mailed to chairs of ADE- and ADFL-member departments early in 2013. For further information, please contact Doug Steward, Associate Director, ADE (646 576-5137; ade@mla.org), or David Goldberg, Associate Director, ADFL (646 576-5134; adfl@mla.org), or consult the ADE and ADFL Web sites.

Total Number of Positions Advertised in the *MLA Job Information List*, 1975–76 to 2011–12



Report on the *MLA Job Information List*

In 2011–12 the number of jobs advertised in the *MLA Job Information List (JIL)* rose slightly for the second year in a row. Compared with 2010–11, the number of jobs announced in 2011–12 increased by 45 (3.8%) in the English edition and by 33 (3.0%) in the foreign language edition, although the number of jobs advertised in 2010–11 remains at a level a third below the 2007–08 peak. In 2011–12 the *JIL*'s English edition announced 1,235 positions, compared with 1,190 in 2010–11; the foreign language edition announced 1,128 positions, compared with 1,095 in 2010–11. After trending upward between 2003–04 and 2007–08 (by 285 positions, or 18.5%, in English and by

395 positions, or 30.7%, in foreign languages), the number of jobs advertised in the *JIL* declined by 726 (39.8%) in English and by 658 (39.2%) in foreign languages over the succeeding two years, 2008–09 and 2009–10. The figure above shows the trend lines for the number of jobs advertised from 1975–76 to 2011–12. The 1,235 positions advertised in this past year's English edition remain 591 (32.4%) below the 2007–08 peak of 1,826; the 1,128 jobs advertised in the foreign language edition remain 552 (32.9%) below the 2007–08 peak of 1,680.

The complete report is available on the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/jilreport201112).

MLA Book Awards

Is your book eligible for an MLA book award? The MLA Committee on Honors and Awards invites authors and editors to compete for the association's publication prizes. There are eight annual and fifteen biennial MLA prizes that honor outstanding work in languages, literatures, and interdisciplinary studies and in specific genres (e.g., translation, bibliography, letters, scholarly edition). For information on the individual prizes, their deadlines, and the application process, please visit the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/award_competitions). You may also request detailed information on any MLA prize by contacting the programs office (646 576-5141; awards@mla.org).

Honorary Members and Fellows

Members are encouraged to submit nominations for honorary members and fellows of the association. Honorary members are distinguished foreign scholars, and honorary fellows are distinguished men and women of letters of any nationality. Those recently elected include Lina Bolzoni, Louise Erdrich, Adrienne Kennedy, Jacques Roubaud, Albert Wendt, and Mo Yan. The current rosters of honorary members and fellows can be found at the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/honorary_members).

Members who would like to recommend honorary members and fellows should refer to the instructions at www.mla.org/nominations_hon.

Exhibit Hall in Boston

At this year's MLA convention over one hundred firms will display books, journals, educational software, electronic databases, and other materials and services of interest to teachers of language and literature. Visit the MLA Exhibit Hall page (www.mla.org/conv_exhibithall) for a list of the 2013 exhibitors, the interactive exhibit hall map, and other exhibit hall information. The Exhibit Hall Theater features presentations by exhibitors, including a demonstration of the new *MLA Commons* platform, search tips for the *MLA Bibliography*, and career advice by *Inside Higher Ed*. Check the *Convention Daily* for other exhibit hall happenings.

Located in the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center (Hall D, level 2), the exhibit hall will be open on 4 and 5 January from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and on 6 January from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Admission to the exhibit area is open to persons wearing convention badges or carrying appropriate passes. There is a lounge area in the hall to use as a place to meet with editors and colleagues.

The *Convention Guide* will contain the exhibit hall floor plan and an updated list of exhibitors as well as general information pertinent throughout the convention. During the conven-

tion, the *Convention Daily* will feature information about receptions, book signings, and other exhibitor-sponsored events that will take place in the exhibit hall. A special 25% discount on all MLA titles will be available to convention attendees in the MLA exhibit booth. Please check the *Convention Daily* and the MLA Annual Convention *Twitter* feed for up-to-date information about the MLA exhibit booth.



STEVE SCHNEIDER PHOTOGRAPHY

Galal Walker Receives ADFL Award

The Executive Committee of the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages has named Galal Walker the 2012 recipient of the ADFL Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession. Walker is a professor of Chinese and the director of the National East Asian Languages Resource Center and the Midwest US–China Flagship Program at Ohio State University. The ADFL award honors members of the profession who have attained a national or international reputation for distinguished service to teaching and scholarship in foreign languages in the context of the mission of ADFL.

Galal Walker has been instrumental in the development of Chinese language studies in the United States since the early 1980s. His work as a teacher, department chair, program director, author, and editor has contributed to establishing a field-wide pedagogical infrastructure based in research and publication for Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. As principal investigator of the National K–12 Chinese Flagship Program (2006–11), Walker oversaw spectacular growth of Chinese language instruction in Ohio schools, with programs expanding from 8 to 117 schools and from about 500 students to over 10,500 in 2011. His Flagship grants from the Department of Defense were notable in envisioning a cohesive and coherent instructional system across all levels, spanning K–12, undergraduate, graduate,

and overseas programs. Graduates of the Ohio Chinese Flagship Program work in international business, finance, research, pedagogy, and government service. Walker has mentored hundreds of graduate students, authored volumes on training teachers of less commonly taught languages, championed the application of performance theory to language learning and teaching, and created innovative multimedia programs for learning Chinese from elementary to advanced levels. He has been tireless in the leadership of national organizations and task forces, including the National Association of Self Instructional Language Programs, the National Council for the Organizations of Less Commonly Taught Languages, the Chinese Language Teachers Association, and the College Board's Chinese Advanced Placement Language program. He is honorary professor at Guizhou Normal University and Wuhan University. In 2003 he was the first US recipient of the China Language and Culture Friendship Award, presented by the People's Republic of China Ministry of Education. Recommending him for the ADFL award, a colleague writes, "Galal Walker has single-handedly changed the field of Chinese language studies with his dedication, commitment, energy, enthusiasm, and unfailing ability to put his vision into practice." Walker will be honored at a special session at the MLA Annual Convention in Boston.

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2. Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions	0	0
3. Paid Distribution outside the Mails including Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution outside USPS®	2,027	1,842
4. Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	115	113
c. Total Paid Distribution	19,189	17,294
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1. Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies	0	0
2. Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies	0	0
3. Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes through the USPS	0	0
4. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution outside the Mail	0	0
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Rosemary G. Feal, Executive Director

PMLA Special Topic: Emotions

The *PMLA* Editorial Board invites essays that reflect on theories or representations of emotions in any period or cultural tradition. Potential contributors are encouraged to consider such questions as these: In what ways have emotions been valued as a form of knowledge or refinement; in what ways have they been rejected or associated with the uneducated? How and why have emotions been gendered or racially defined? How have emotions been understood to affect the imagination? How has emotion been conceptualized as disembodied or as excessively embodied, and what are the implications of these competing notions? What have been the psychological aspects of emotions, whether repressed or unbridled? What are the affective dimensions of reading or viewing (sympathy, identification, alienation, subjective transformation)? What have been the epistemological, aesthetic, political, or moral dimensions of emotion? The coordinators of the special topic are Katharine Ann Jensen (Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge) and Miriam L. Wallace (New Coll. of Florida). The deadline for submissions is 4 November 2013. For a complete description of the topic and for submission guidelines, please see www.mla.org/pmla_submitting.

Calls for Papers for the 2014 Convention

The 2014 MLA Annual Convention will be held in Chicago from 9 to 12 January. Calls for papers may be submitted through the MLA Web site under the Convention heading (www.mla.org/cfp_main). Submissions will be accepted until 21 February 2013. Organizers are responsible for responding to all inquiries.

Calls for papers may be viewed online at www.mla.org/conv_papers. Members should familiarize themselves with the guidelines for the MLA convention, which appear on the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/conv_procedures), before writing to the organizers listed in the calls for papers. If not provided, organizers' addresses are available in the members' directory on the MLA Web site. All participants in convention sessions must be MLA members by 7 April 2013. A member may participate (e.g., by facilitating a workshop, reading a paper, or serving as a speaker, presider, or respondent) only twice at a convention.

Participants must indicate their audiovisual needs when they respond to a call for papers and should check with the chair of the session or with the MLA convention office to be sure that the necessary equipment has been ordered by 1 April 2013. Because the need for audiovisual equipment is a major factor in the scheduling of meetings (and because the movement of equipment is both costly and hazardous), the 1 April deadline is firm.

Members without Internet access who need a printout of the calls for papers should write or call the MLA office to have a copy mailed to them (membership@mla.org; 646 576-5151).



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Dated Material
Please deliver by 23 November

Five New MLA Titles to Be Released

- *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o*
- *Approaches to Teaching Milton's Paradise Lost, Second Edition*
- *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*
- *Approaches to Teaching The Story of the Stone (Dream of the Red Chamber)*
- *Teaching Anglophone Caribbean Literature*

For complete information on these and other new titles, and to place orders, please visit www.mla.org/newtitles.

