This past fall, the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon presented a major exhibition on the art of the superhero. Curated by Associate Professor of English, Ben Saunders, Faster Than a Speeding Bullet: The Art of the Superhero, ran from September 26, 2009, through January 3, 2010. It featured 173 pages of production art—the hand-drawn and hand-lettered pages from which comics are printed. The exhibit included a wide range of works by multiple artists, dating from the 1940s to the present day. Three of the most rare and historically important comic books were also displayed in the exhibit: Famous Funnies #1, the first nationally distributed comic book, from 1934; Action Comics #1 featuring the first appearance of Superman from 1938; and Superman #1, the first comic to take its title from a superhero, in 1939.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Saunders organized a major academic conference, Understanding Superheroes (October 23–24, 2009). The conference brought together speakers from inside the comics industry and the academy. Three nationally recognized experts on superheroes delivered keynote addresses: Danny Fingeroth (former writer and editor at Marvel Comics, and author of Disguised As Clark Kent: Jews, Comics, and the Creation of the Superhero); Professor Charles Hatfield (Cal State, Northridge); and Professor Henry Jenkins (Professor of Communications at USC). The conference featured a creator panel, with three major comic book writers: Kurt Busiek (author of literally thousands of superhero comics since the 1980s); Gail Simone (one of the few women writers to have enjoyed considerable success in the superhero genre); and Matt Fraction (currently writing several projects for Marvel Comics).

Saunders shares his thoughts on the exhibit and conference:

“While teaching a course on the History of Superheroes, I became aware that most of my students knew very little about the formal aspects of the medium, including the material process of comic book production. An exhibition was an obvious way of providing insight into the process. I decided to focus on the superhero because while certain comics are more highly regarded within our institutions of culture and education these days—specifically memoir-oriented “graphic novels”—genre work remains poorly understood, and is still...”
Faculty and Graduate Students Participate in New Colloquium on Poetry and Poetics

In winter term of 2010 the English department at the University of Oregon implemented a new method of studying discussion on the ideas that the engendered in the field of poetry. The Poetics and Poetry Colloquium met once per week throughout the term as a one-credit course in which students read a selection of significant texts on the theory of poetry. Each week a different faculty member presented a text from the field of poetry to a small group of assembled students and faculty members, and led discussion of the course reading’s textual and thematic content. The course was initially developed as a support module for graduate students in the English department’s Structural Emphasis in Poetry and Poetics. This structured emphasis allows graduate students to follow a curriculum of study that is specifically tailored to the study of poetry and poetics. The readings presented each week in the colloquium were taken directly from the required reading list for the structured emphasis and allowed students to work through the readings alongside participating faculty members as guides. Presenters for the

TURNOFCOLLOQUIUM|PAGE4

Undergraduate Seminar Spotlight: Cultural History of the Robot

The English department recently offered a fascinating course opportunity in the advanced English majors. The Cultural History of the Robot, an English capstone seminar, was taught this past spring term by Associate Professor Richard Stevenson, a specialist in Renaissance literature and culture. The course focused on, in Bovilsky’s words, “the actual history of automata, robots, and cyborgs in reality and narrative, from the hydraulic and pneumatic automata of the ancient world, to the realist mechanical automata of the eighteenth century, able to write, play musical instruments, and even serve food, to more recent developments in the electronic and computer eras.” The class traced that history through fiction, film, drama, and poetry. Readings ranged from the ancient world to the present: the Aeneid, The Fairie Queen, Frankenstein, Karel Capek’s stage play, R.U.R (in which the term “robot” was first coined); films included Fritz Lang’s Metropolis, The Day the Earth Stood Still, Terminator 2, and Ghost in the Shell. This vigorous and stimulating seminar was open to English majors at the junior or senior level, with registration limited to fifteen. The intimate classroom atmosphere nourished engaged discussion and increased interaction between students and professor. The intensity of the environment created exciting discussions every class period; topics ranged from the relative believability of robot representations in individual texts to more philosophical inquiries into what it means to be human. Indeed, discussion often focused, in Bovilsky’s words, on “whether robots in some form could ever be meaningfully counted as human, or whether robots in some form could ever be meaningfully distinguished from human beings.” This interest, she explains, “led to some great, hard conversations about what qualities and characteristics are distinctive of people.”

LARA BOVILSKY
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Speaker Series Features Five Distinguished Scholars, Authors

This spring term, the University of Oregon and the English department welcomed Junot Díaz as the second speaker of the Collins Distinguished Speakers Series, an occasional public forum devoted to the intellectual exploration of modernity, ethnicity, and globality. The Nancy Allen Professor of English at MIT, Díaz is the recipient of numerous distinguished fellowships including the Guggenheim and the NEH, and winner of prestigious literary awards including the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2008 for his powerful novel, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao. This year, Díaz has received the PEN/Parke-Davis Fiction Writer’s Award and the Whiting Award for his short fiction collection, Drown. His other novels include The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao the series concluded with Jordan, director of The Dickens Project at the University of California, Santa Cruz, who presented “Focalization and Temporality in the Illustrations to Charles Dickens’s Bleak House.”

PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING NOVELIST JUNOT DIAZ READS.

Teaches at the UO

JUNOT DIAZ
PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING NOVELIST

Series, explains, “I was mesmerized by his collection of short stories, Drown, when it first came out a dozen or so years ago, and I was once again dazzled by the magical realism of The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao.” Li describes Díaz’s prose as “precise, piercing, and forever-powerful,” and Diaz as “a major voice of
**COLLOQUIUM**

**FROM PAGE 2**

The colloquium was organized in a loose, chronological order, but largely developed organically around the interests of each of the presenters. The group discussed essays and theory by a wide range of authors, including Homer, William Wordsworth, Percy Shelley, Ezra Pound, James Weldon Johnson, Ivor Winters, Kenneth Burke, Theodor Adorno, Paul De Man, and Stanley Fish, as well as a selection of poems by Tennyson, Thackeray, Wyndham Lewis, John Donne, Samuel Coleridge, Ezra Pound, HD, and John Berryman. Although the colloquium was initially intended for students within the Structured Emphasis in the English department, it attracted a diversity of student and faculty attendance, reaching outside of the structured emphasis and the English department altogether, including students in comparative literature and creative writing. First-year PhD student in English, Paul Bellew, who regularly attended the colloquium, said, "I feel grateful for the experience." The intimate gatherings fostered an ideal environment for discussion and created, in convener Pyle’s words, “a site where questions of poetry and politics collide in surprising ways.

**NEW FACULTY BOOKS**

Cynthia H. Tolentino’s America’s Experts: Race and the Fictions of Sociology (University of Minnesota Press, 2009) reveals the impact of sociology on ethnic literature and the politics of race. The book explores the rising visibility of anticolonial and antiracism movements during World War II that exposed contradictions between the U.S. democratic mission in Europe and racial practices against people of color at home. Yet the professional success stories of people of color gave ideological support to the notion that liberal antiracism was spreading within the United States. Challenging conventional accounts of U.S. ethnic literature rooted in 1960s and 1970s social movements, Tolentino sees this literary work as emerging from a political climate in which arguments about the integration of racial minorities and the moral legitimacy of U.S. international leadership are intertwined. Probing how sociologists situated Asian Americans, Filipinos, and African Americans as model citizens and problems, Tolentino contends that such studies served as a strategic tool to preserve color as a narrative of racial identity, citizenship, and U.S. neocolonialism.

**SPARKER SERIES**

**FROM PAGE 3**

American letters." While on campus, Diaz gave a workshop for students in creative writing, provided a seminar for graduate students and faculty in members English, read from his novel and work-in-progress, and fielded questions from a rapt audience of students, staff, faculty, and community members, which overflowed the auditorium. English Professor Paul Peppis shares Professor Li’s enthusiasm, describing Diaz’s reading as, “one of the most exciting, entertaining, and educational public presentations I’ve seen. Junot Diaz is an amazing writer and an amazing teacher.”

**ENGLISH GRADUATE PROGRAM ALUMNI RETURN TO PLC**

Last August, the English department hosted a reunion for graduate students who had attended between 1965 and 1975. The reunion kicked off with a reception in the PLC courtyard, where the alumni mingled with faculty members who had taught in those years, including William Cadbury, Thelma Greenfield, Joseph Hynes, Glen Love, William Rockefeller, Ralph Salisbury, Barre Toelken, Kingsley Weatherhead, George Wickes, and Roland Bartel, age ninety, who served throughout the weekend. The reunion was organized by John “Jack” Wilson Foster, PhD 70, and Rob Garratt, PhD ’72, who were motivated, as Foster explains, “not by simple nostalgia or by the mere wish to see old friends again but by a desire to celebrate and commemorate some extraordinary years in the life of the department, the university, the state, and country, and of course in the lives of the grad students.” Alumni came from as far away as Alberta, New York, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Saskatchewan, and Ireland.

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**IN THE HEART OF LONDON, THE TOWER BRIDGE CROSSES THE RIVER THAMES.**

Eugene in London: The First Edition

In early January of 2010, in the developing stages of what would be the coldest winter in at least thirty years, a hearty band of UO English majors and one faculty member braved the icy streets of London for a term of study abroad. In case any reader is sitting at the edge of her seat, we’ll cut to the essential news: they survived—and thrived!

Three months later, after close to ten theatrical and musical performances, numerous walking tours, more museum visits than anyone in the group is prepared to enumerate, gallons of hot coffee (but go figure: tea is replacing coffee as the central London beverage of choice), and hundreds of hours in the underground, the first “Eugene in London” departmentally-organized term abroad can be called a success. Together the group visited destinations as varied as Liverpool, Greenwich, Oxford, and Bath, and students on their own took the “Channel” to Paris and European points beyond. The first group excursion to The Tower on an icy January day helped everyone appreciate the bone-chilling plight of its prisoners.
The Egoist (1879), a comic masterpiece by George Meredith, takes the traditional marriage plot of English domestic fiction and turns it on its head. Edited by Richard Stevenson, the novel (Broadview Press, 2010) describes the repeated and disastrous courtships of Sir Willoughby Patmore, the eponym of the title. Three women become engaged to Sir Willoughby, but, despite their relationships with Margaret Fuller, Thomas Carlyle, and other contemporaries. A lively volume, written from diverse philosophical, literary, and historical perspectives, the essays offer close readings of selected texts and draw on letters and journals to offer a comprehensive view of how Emerson’s and Thoreau’s friendships took root and bolstered their individual political, social, and ethical projects. With special attention to the complex friendship between these two philosopher-writers, this collection explores how, in their own ways, Emerson and Thoreau conceived of friendship as the creation of shared meaning in light of personal differences, tragedy and loss, and changing life circumstances. Emerson and Thoreau presents important reflections on the role of friendship in the lives of individuals and in the contemporary context of global culture.

In Other Others: Levinas, Literature, Transcultural Studies (SUNY Press, 2010), Steven Shankman looks at literary works from outside the Judeo-Christian tradition to test Levinas’s notion of “the Other.” In literary and cultural studies today, the term “the Other” appears to have largely lost its primacy in the primacy of the subjective encounter, focusing rather on its social construction of the Other. For Emmanuel Levinas, in contrast, the Other is precisely that which eludes construction and categorization. In a study that ranges from literature of ancient China, Greece, and Israel to modern Egypt, Italy, West Africa, and America, Shankman tests Levinas’s ideas on reading literary works from outside the Judeo-Christian orbit for figurations equivalent to Levinas’s notion of the Other. In contemporary literary and cultural studies, it is often assumed that culture has the last word. However, as Levinas insists—and as Shankman argues—it is ethics that is the “presupposition of all Culture,” that is situated “before Culture.”

The past spring term, scholars from around the world converged on the University of Oregon for the Console-ing Passions International Conference on Television, Audio, Video, New Media, and Feminism. Beginning on Thursday, April 22 and continuing through Saturday, April 24, the Erb Memorial Union was the temporary home of an array of intellectuals, from within and outside the academy, taking part in numerous panels, screenings, workshops, and exhibits devoted to media studies in a feminist context. This year’s conference was organized by our own dedicated University of Oregon faculty members Priscilla Petta Ovalle and Carol Stable, hosted by the Center for the Study of Women in Society, and sponsored by a range of University of Oregon colleges, departments, programs, and centers, including the English department. The conference was originally conceived as part of the Console-ing Passions Organization, founded in 1989 by a group of scholars and artists focused on issues within and outside the Judeo-Christian tradition to test Levinas’s notion of “the Other.” The conference was first coordinated in 1992 and this year’s program marked the thirteenth of these semiannual gatherings. The gathering consisted of a plenary session, a reception held in the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, and a bevy of diverse panels. The panels formed the backbone of the conference program, each consisting of a small number of conference participants who presented their own scholarly work in the field and responded to questions on the topics raised. Complementary presentations were grouped together by organizers into panels focusing on issues within the field, ranging from reality television to contemporary web culture. The conference not only brought thinkers from around the world to our campus, but also provided a forum for University of Oregon students to present and discuss their own work in the field. Drew Board, fourth-year Ph.D student in English and film, presented a paper as part of a panel on History, Trauma, and Detection; he remarked on his presentation that he received “really helpful feedback. It was a great panel.” Jenne Wilde, a second-year Ph.D student in English and folklore who presented papers on two different panels, commented, “In my presentations, I felt like my ideas were respected and encouraged with good feedback and interest from participants. It’s the first conference in which I really felt like I belonged!” The Console-ing Passions Conference presented a wonderful opportunity for our own students to be part of a respected, international conference without even leaving campus, and it further secures the University of Oregon’s place on the forefront of scholarship in feminist and new media studies.

UO Hosts Major Conference on Television, Audio, Video, New Media, and Feminism

Horror and the Horrific Film Series

This year’s English department-sponsored film series triggered shrieks and shivers with the theme “Horror and the Horrific.” Graduate students and post-doctoral fellows introduced each film with a talk and held a question-and-answer session following the screenings. Presenters’ research drew upon the horror genre but often crossed over into other genres as well. Featuring a range of horror films, including David Cronenberg’s Shivers (1975), John Carpenter’s Halloween (1978), Neil Jordan’s The Company of Wolves (1984), and George Romero’s Land of the Dead (2002), the series encouraged viewers to examine the multiplicity of ways in which cinematic horror has been achieved through experimentation with narrative, style, technology, and genre, among others. Rather than viewing the horror genre in monistic terms, “Horror and the Horrific” explored how the medium of film has been fashioned and refashioned to elicit horror from audiences. Presenters included Anthony Hayt, Carter Soles, Drew Beard, Patricia Oman, Stephen Rust, Shane Billings, Marcus Hensel, Larissa Ennis, Robert Voelker-Morris, Brenna Wardell, Emily West Afanador, and Jeong Chang.

EMERALD OASIS" THE CONSOLE-ING PASSIONS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TELEVISION, AUDIO, VIDEO, NEW MEDIA, AND FEMINISM 2009-2010

This just seemed time to take this remarkable expression of the popular hunger for heroic fantasy more seriously.

BEN SAUNDERS
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

SUPERHEROES
FROM PAGE 1

subject to remarkably dismissive criticism. But superheroes are obviously enormously popular outside of the academy, and have been now for more than seventy years. It just seemed time to take this remarkable expression of the popular hunger for heroic fantasy more seriously.

I hope Faster Than a Speeding Bullet: The Art of the Superhero will be just the first exhibit of its kind, that it has laid the groundwork for the growth of comics studies at the University of Oregon, and has helped bring positive attention to the wide range of innovative work being done in the humanities at the University of Oregon. I hope the Understanding Superheroes conference helped dispel the academic prejudice against genre work in comic studies and helped bring attention to the variety and rigor of methodological approaches available to students of the humanities.

Saunders expresses his thanks to the Jordan Schnitzer Museum, the Oregon Humanities Center, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Judaic Studies Program, the Comparative Literature Program, and the English department for their support, the staff of the Museum who lent work for the exhibit, particularly Ethan Roberts, Stephen Fisher, and David Mandel.

"It just seemed time to take this remarkable expression of the popular hunger for heroic fantasy more seriously."
Faculty News

Martha Bayles published *The Body and the Brain in Middle Age: Seduction Lyrics,* in *Neophilologus,* and “Danny Kaye and the ‘Fairy Tale’ of Queerness in The Court Jester,* in *Queening Medieval Movies* (Ashgate 2009), ed. Kathleen Coyne Kelly and Tison Pugh, PhD '00.

Elizabeth Bohls gave a keynote address, “Afghan Exploration and British Slavery: Munro’s Pungo’s Coffle,* at a conference entitled “Correspondence: Travel, Writing, and Literatures of Exploration” (May 2009) in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Allison Caruth published two articles that emerge from her book manuscript, *Global Appetites: Imaging the Power of Food,* under review. Two articles related to new research are forthcoming in the collections *Postcolonial Ecologies* (Oxford University Press) and another on “Military Occupation and Politics at the UO and a Sony Scholar Award. With the support of the Morse Center, she is organizing a conference about the support of arts and sustainability for February 2011 at the UO.

Michael Coppperman recently published essays in *GOOD,* Stanford Magazine, and *Post Road,* and has a creative non-fiction book from New Madrid. He recently won the Walter F. Moore Fellowship from Oregon Literary Arts. His story, “Harm,” was shortlisted for the Seattle Magazine Great Critic for the Fiction Prize from the Munster Literature Centre, published in their journal *New Writers New Writing* (2009). He is finishing his upcoming book from Copper Nickel and Unsaid.

Karen Ford received an Oregon Humanities Center Research Fellowship for fall 2010 and an NEH We the People Humanities Center Research Fellowship for fall 2010 and an NEH We the People Humanities Center Research Fellowship. She was also invited by the *New York Times* to the William and Mary Quarterly-


Deborah Shappelle’s essay, “African Skin, Victorian Masks: The Object Lessons of Mary Kingsley and Edward Bulder” is forthcoming in *Victorian Literature and Culture.* Professor Emerita Sherman Warner was the keynote speaker at the international film symposium, *Future Past: Curation and Collecting in Collaborative Ethnographic Film Work,* in Regensburg, Germany, this May; she spoke on “Collaborative Ethnographic Films and the Negotiation of Cultural Identities.” She presented film sessions at the meetings of the American Folklore Society and the Western States Folklore Society. She discussed her work in filmmaking in the winter 2010 issue of the *Center for the Study of Women in Society’s “Research Matters” newsletter,* having last year been awarded a CSWS research grant.

Carol Stable’s article, “George the Queer Danced the Hula,” is forthcoming in *Intimacy Across Borders: The Native Nation in a Mobile World.*
Graduate Student News

Drew Beard presented “The Shark is No Longer Working: Horror and 3-D’s Failed Intervention” as part of the “Horror and the Horror” film series, and “Ghost Story Confessionalists: Articulations of Family Trauma in the Discovery Channel’s ‘A Haunting’” at the Console-ing Passions conference, Eugene, Oregon.

Jessica Belanger presented “Men as Monsters: Masculinity, the Discourse and Stereotyping in VH1’s ‘Tool Academy’” at the Console-ing Passions conference, Eugene, Oregon.

Megan Benner has been awarded an Oregon Humanities Center Dissertation Fellowship for the upcoming fall term.

Taylor Donnelly will present papers at the Oregon Composition and Rhetoric Conference in May, and at the Madness and Literature Conference at the University of Nottingham in August. She is also working on a chapter for a forthcoming book about Shirley Jackson.

Andrew Grace served as a visiting instructor and tutor for English Language learners at Gustavus Adolphus College for the spring semester.

Marcus Hensel presented “An Unholy Trinity: Functional Interpretations of Literary Monsters” at the South Eastern Medieval Association Conference, Austin, this month. At the American Literature Association Conference in Tacoma, Washington, he organized two panels, one of which he chaired, and presented “Can the Monster Speak? Silence and the Grondevall’s Status as Monsters.”

Nick Henson presented “Anarchist Theives and Cowboy Capitalists: Reclaiming the Cowboy in Pynchon’s Against the Day” at the Institute of American Literature Association Conference and “California Traverses: Lines of Resistance in Pynchon’s Against the Day and Vindaloo” at the American Literature Association Conference.

Jenny Noyce presented “The City In the Country: Incursions of Violence in Northern Ireland Troubles Thrillers” at the American Comparative Literature Association conference, New Orleans. She has also received a full scholarship to attend the Irish Film Festival in Dublin this summer.

Jeni Rinner was awarded a two-week collaborative writing residency with her partner Jeremy Gates to pursue work on a book of children’s poetry. The grant was from The Spring Creek Fund for Ideas, Nature, and the Written Word at Oregon State University.

Kelly Jane Rosenblatt joined the board of the Prison University Project where she will be spending the next five years. The board works to provide higher education programs to incarcerated people at San Quentin State Prison; create a replicable model; and stimulate public activity and dialogue about higher education at all levels and criminal justice institutions.

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The Society of Professional Journalists awarded the 2009 Mark of Excellence Award for best television feature to a documentary film about Professor Steve Shankman’s Inside-Out class, Literature and Ethics: Don Quixote and Dostoevsky’s The Idiot, taught for the Clark Honors College, spring 2009.

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program is dedicated to “examining social issues through the prism of prison,” and brings together for a common educational experience students from inside and outside prison, examining specific course material with awareness of its potential for enriching understanding of questions of ethics, law, and justice.

Inside Looking Out is a ten-minute documentary on the Inside-Out Program, which features a classroom with “outside” students (from the Clark Honors College) and “inside” students (incarcerated at Oregon State Penitentiary). The film was produced in Associate Professor of Journalism Dan Miller’s Documentary Production class as part of the Oregon Documentary Project, which is hosted in the UO School of Journalism and Communication. Tiffany Kimmel and Jessica Reedy, students from the UO’s School of Journalism and Communication, produced and directed the piece. The film was also screened at the annual meeting of the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics in Denver this past fall, where Professor Shankman gave a talk based in part on his experiences in the Inside-Out course, entitled “Reading Dostoevsky in Prison After Levinas.”

Professor Shankman’s Inside-Out course last spring inspired not only an award-winning documentary, but also Professor Emeritus William Cadbury, who had assisted in Professor Shankman’s course, to attend a week-long training program in Philadelphia last summer so that he could teach his own Inside-Out classes for the English department. Having emerged from a contented retirement from the classroom, Cadbury taught his first Inside-Out class, Ethics and Aesthetics in Film, this spring. The course considered how a set of nine films, many of them engaging criminal justice issues, can “lead us to richer personal understanding of each other and of incarceration.”

For more on the Inside-Out Program, go to insideoutcenter.org.