

## Editors' Preface

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This journal is called *Expositions: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities*. The first part of the title (chosen by our founding editor, Peter Busch) derives from St. Augustine's *Expositions of the Psalms*. The name seemed appropriate as the journal is published by an Augustinian university and would be based on the interpretation of classic texts. The second part of the title, "Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities," has meanings both obvious and elusive – in particular, that buzzword, *interdisciplinary*. Attempting to define this term can be like going down a rabbit-hole.

When a historian discusses literary and philosophical texts while describing the spirit of an era, and a theologian considers the social and political context of a sacred book while employing literary techniques of interpretation, and a literary critic deploys terms borrowed from anthropology and evolutionary biology, this is all happily interdisciplinary and, by now, commonplace. If an academic discipline is a system or collection of methods and practices, then we all have plenty to learn from one another. So long as there are more approaches ready to hand, there is more work to be done. A discipline can be like a martial art or a form of yoga, a series of *moves*.

However, interdisciplinarity can all too often mean "going on a holiday," becoming a dilettante, losing all scholarly rigor. Too often this involves a well-trained scholar in a particular academic field choosing to write a light piece about a favorite novel or film or television show, or making a strong claim about a historical period or political institution or social movement without doing the necessary spadework. We do our best at *Expositions* to avoid publishing such work, provocative though it may be.

The real question is, What is *good* interdisciplinary work? We hope that the varied contributions of this, our Fall 2012 issue, provide some answers. Here, [in a stimulating and refreshingly direct interview with Alasdair MacIntyre](#), one can learn that "[i]t is the task of any worthwhile university not just to educate in particular disciplines, but to enable its students to understand how each discipline contributes to an overall understanding of the human condition and so to become reflective." One can [contrast the various responses](#) to Daryn Lehoux's daring new book on Roman science, seeing not only how it may transform our understanding of the Romans but of the scientific enterprise itself and the epistemological assumptions of it. One can [gain fresh insights into Cervantes' Don Quixote](#) and [consider the objections to Brad Gregory's sweeping claims about the origins of contemporary secularism in the Protestant Reformation](#). Finally, following up on our well-received "Overheard in the Academy" about the [Future of Classical](#)

[Studies](#), we now offer a new “Overheard” on The Future of the English Department, where one can discover how the study of English literature and the teaching of writing have been profoundly affected by technology, political advocacy, the diversification and corporatization of the university, and inherent paradoxes within its own conceptual framework.

Needless to say, we are deeply indebted to Alasdair MacIntyre for granting us an interview, and special thanks must be given to Liam Kavanagh for conducting it. Jacqueline Feke was the principal organizer of the “Academic Roundtable” on Lehoux’s book on Roman science. Janine Utell assembled and coordinated the “Overheard in the Academy” on the Future of the English Department. Natalie Zullinger provided sustained editorial assistance. We are fortunate to have such people associated with our journal.