Greetings from the Chair

Feynman Prize received, fellowships for graduate students and postdocs endowed, dissertations completed, new classes taught, books and articles published to the four winds of academia, lectures given in distant corners of the globe—in 2015 HSS lived under the sign of the cornucopia. It is our fortune to celebrate this diversity of accomplishments, as it has been for the past half century. It will be our duty and privilege to nurture it in 2016 and beyond.

Live long, prosper, and may the curiosity be with you.

Jean-Laurent Rosenthal
Rea A. and Lela G. Axline Professor of Business Economics; Chair, Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences
Caltech Team Competed in the CQA Investment Challenge

Caltech students participated for the first time in the annual Chicago Quantitative Alliance (CQA) Investment Challenge, in which student teams invest in the real stock market using investment simulation software and are ranked based on absolute return, risk-adjusted return, and an evaluation of their strategy presentations. The Caltech team consisted of graduate student Kevin Linghu and undergraduates Justin Leong and Hui Liu, with Kenneth Winston, Lecturer in Economics at Caltech and Chief Risk Officer at Western Asset Management Company, as mentor.

The Earnest C. Watson Lecture Series

Featured John P. O’Doherty

In a public talk titled “How the Brain Learns from the Past and Makes Good Decisions for the Future: A Tour of Neural Reinforcement Learning,” Professor of Psychology John O’Doherty—who also serves as director of the Caltech Brain Imaging Center—summarized the current understanding of the network of brain areas involved in learning from past actions. He explained how this knowledge, beyond helping us better understand human behavior in general, might provide new insights into psychiatric disorders in which the capacity to make sound decisions is sometimes compromised.

Art + Tech Speaker Series Launched

Hillary Mushkin, Research Professor of Art and Design in Mechanical and Civil Engineering, and Christa Robbins, Mellon Caltech-Huntington Postdoctoral Instructor in Art History, co-organized a new speaker series that brings together Caltech/JPL scientists and engineers with artists and scholars for conversations on themes that bridge art, science, and technology. The series kicked off on January 27 with a panel on “automata,” and panels on remote sensing and networks followed in March and May, respectively. The series continues in 2016 with its first event on January 26.
Caltech Awarded Kevin Gilmartin the Richard P. Feynman Prize for Excellence in Teaching

Professor of English Kevin Gilmartin was honored by fellow faculty and students with the annual prize that recognizes a Caltech professor’s “unusual ability, creativity, and innovation” in teaching. Gilmartin, who has taught at Caltech for the past 24 years, was nominated by students in several different disciplines who praised his enthusiasm and accessibility, his artful handling of classroom discussion and debate, and his patient tutoring in the fine art of writing.

The New York Times Based a Lead Editorial on Morgan Kousser’s Research

The April 18 New York Times editorial “Voting Rights, by the Numbers” relied heavily on a groundbreaking overview of the history of U.S. voting rights from 1957 to 2013 prepared by William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of History and Social Science J. Morgan Kousser. The editorial called into question the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2013 ruling to strike down the heart of the Voting Rights Act—its preclearance requirement—citing Kousser’s study as evidence that discriminatory voting practices are still prevalent.

Hixon Writing Center Organized Faculty Roundtable on Writing Popular Books about Science

The Hixon Writing Center and the Center for Teaching, Learning & Outreach organized a well-attended roundtable last April featuring three Caltech professors who discussed the challenges and rewards of writing successful science books for non-experts. Watch a video of the roundtable on the Hixon Writing Center’s website at writing.caltech.edu.

Series of Career Panels Featuring Caltech Alumni in Finance Continued

In late 2014, Linde Institute Professor of Finance Richard Roll invited three Caltech alumni to speak with students about how they leveraged their science and engineering degrees into successful careers in finance. The series continued in 2015, in partnership with Caltech’s Career Development Center, with four additional alumni panels on careers in finance, management, and consulting. Students have the opportunity to conduct one-on-one interviews with the participating alumni on the same day as the panel discussions. Read more about the ongoing panels on The Linde Institute website (www.lindeinstitute.caltech.edu).

HSS Welcomed HKUST Visiting Professor Wenkai He

Professor He was the first visitor to Caltech from Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) under a faculty-exchange program with HSS. While in residence, he taught a course called Selected Topics in Economics: The Economy and the State in Late Imperial China, 1600–1911. In winter term 2016, HSS welcomes its second visitor under the exchange program, Albert Park, Chair Professor, Division of Social Science, and Professor of Economics at HKUST, and formerly Professor of the Economy of China in the Department of Economics and School for Interdisciplinary Area Studies at University of Oxford.

HSS Celebrated John Ledyard’s 75th Birthday

In April, current and former faculty, students, and staff came together to honor the career of Alan and Lenabelle Davis Professor of Economics and Social Sciences and former HSS Division Chair John O. Ledyard on the occasion of his 75th birthday. The commemorations included a two-day conference inspired by Ledyard’s fundamental contributions to game theory and their applications to economics and political science.

Linde Institute Professor of Finance Richard Roll Awarded the Onassis Prize in Finance

Awarded only once every three years by the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation and the Cass Business School, part of City University London, the Onassis Prizes honor the contributions of top thinkers in the fields of finance, international trade, and shipping. Roll was recognized for his “foundational contributions to finance since the beginning of its transformation to a rigorous science-based discipline, nearly a half century ago.” According to HSS Division Chair Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, “Richard Roll anchors a revitalized program in finance at Caltech that is now making great strides in both original research and in improving the course offerings for both undergraduate and graduate students. It is wonderful to see him recognized with this prestigious prize.”
Caltech Hosted Writer Joyce Carol Oates and Neuroscientist Charlie Gross in Conversation

HSS partnered with the Division of Biology and Biological Engineering to host the prolific author and her neuroscientist husband in conversation about the intersection of art and science before a standing-room-only crowd in Baxter Lecture Hall. As recounted by Larry Wilson in his May 2, 2015, Pasadena Star-News column following the event, during this “meeting of the scientific and artistic minds,” Oates and Gross “proved a marvelous couple in conversation, playing off each other, each brilliant, each non-pedantically so.” A video of their conversation is available on the HSS website.

The Linde Institute Sponsored the First Caltech + Finance Symposium

On May 1, thanks to the support of The Ronald and Maxine Linde Institute of Economic and Management Sciences, HSS hosted a one-day symposium that demonstrated how Caltech faculty and alumni have helped shape finance and economics and influenced economic theory, policy, and practice. At this inaugural event celebrating the Institute’s eminent history and bright future in these fields, three of Caltech’s most distinguished alumni offered their insights as leaders in business finance and scholars of financial economics. Read more about the symposium and Caltech’s financial economics program on The Linde Institute website.

Dehn Gilmore Awarded Tenure

Caltech promoted Dehn Gilmore to Professor of English this past summer. Her research centers around the relationship between Victorian literature and culture. Her first book, The Victorian Novel and the Space of Art: Fictional Form on Display (Cambridge, 2013), argues for the crucial importance of visual culture as a force shaping the formal development and reading history of the Victorian novel. Gilmore’s current book project, “Large as Life”: The Victorians’ Disproportionate Reality, examines the Victorian obsession with life-sized representation and how this obsession both shaped and was shaped by Victorian ideas of political representation, scientific research, artistic depiction, and novelist realism.

The Harris Lecture Series Featured Alan Turing Biographer Andrew Hodges

In May, Andrew Hodges, PhD, gave a talk in Beckman Auditorium as part of the William & Myrtle Harris Distinguished Lectureship in Science and Civilization. Hodges is the author of Alan Turing: The Enigma, the book upon which the Academy Award–winning movie (Adapted Screenplay) The Imitation Game is based. Alan Turing was the founder of modern computer science and the chief scientific cryptographer of the Second World War.

The next Harris Lecture is on April 13, 2016, with Stanford University’s John Ioannidis, who is perhaps best known for his 2005 paper “Why Most Published Research Findings Are False.” Additional information about the Harris lecture series, including videos of past lectures, can be found on the HSS website.

Cindy Weinstein Appointed Inaugural Chief Diversity Officer

President Rosenbaum announced to the Caltech community in June that Vice Provost and Professor of English Cindy Weinstein would serve as Caltech’s first Chief Diversity Officer. In this new role, she helps coordinate activities in the Center for Diversity, chairs the President’s Diversity Council, and serves as the point person in cross-campus efforts to increase the diversity of the Caltech community. Weinstein’s purview as Vice Provost includes the Council on Undergraduate Education, accreditation, the Staff and Faculty Consultation Center, Student-Faculty Programs, the Center for Teaching, Learning & Outreach, and the libraries.
Assistant Professor of Economics and Mathematics

Omer Tamuz

Tamuz arrived at Caltech this past summer following a two-year Schramm Postdoctoral Fellowship with MIT and Microsoft Research New England. He received his PhD in mathematics from the Weizmann Institute of Science in 2013. His research is in microeconomic theory, including social learning and games on networks, as well as in probability, ergodic theory, and group theory. He also is interested in machine learning and statistics. Recognition for Tamuz's research includes the Michael B. Maschler Prize in Game Theory (2013) and a Google fellowship in social computing (2011).

As an undergraduate at Tel Aviv University, Tamuz participated in the search for extrasolar planets with Professor of Physics & Astronomy Tsevi Mazeh. He also has worked on algorithm development in the software industry.

Assistant Professor of Finance

Lawrence Jin

Jin joined HSS after receiving his PhD in financial economics from Yale University in May 2015. He previously worked as a research and trading analyst at Citigroup after earning an MS in electrical engineering from Caltech. Jin’s research—which has been published in the Review of Financial Studies and the Journal of Financial Economics—focuses on asset pricing, behavioral finance, financial intermediaries, and household finance.

Jin’s JFE paper “X-CAPM: An Extrapolative Asset Pricing Model” received the Q-Group’s 2014 Jack Treynor Prize, which recognizes superior academic papers with potential applications in the fields of investment management and financial markets. Jin also received the 2015 AQR Top Finance Graduate Award, granted to scholars whose “dissertation and broader research potential carry the greatest promise of making an impact on the finance practice and academia.”

At Caltech’s 121st commencement on June 12, the following HSS graduate students received PhDs:

Kyle Ian Carlson ("Three Essays on Economics and Information Shocks")
Matthew C. Chao ("How Behavioral Economics Can Shape Firm Strategy and Public Policy: Lessons from the Field and Laboratory")
Jonathan Neil Chapman ("Death or Taxes? The Political Economy of Sanitation Expenditure in Nineteenth-Century Britain")
Khai Xiang Chiong ("Essays in Social and Economic Networks")

Geoffrey Worth Fisher ("Value Estimation and Comparison in Multi-Attribute Choice")
Jaclyn Kimble ("The Voting Rights Act, Shelby County, and Redistricting: Improving Estimates of Racially Polarized Voting in a Multiple-Election Context")
Matthew Luke Kovach ("Essays in Behavioral Decision Theory")
Allyson Leigh Pellissier ("At Your Convenience: Facilitating Voting and Registration")
Kirill Pogorelskiy ("Essays on Correlated Equilibrium and Voter Turnout")

Keith Pluymers Appointed as the First Jessen Postdoctoral Instructor

Thanks to the generosity of Howard Jessen (Caltech BS ’46) and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the newest endowed postdoctoral instructorship in HSS is known as the Howard E. and Susanne C. Jessen Postdoctoral Instructor in the Humanities. The first Jessen postdoc, Keith Pluymers, joined us last summer after receiving his PhD in environmental history and early modern European history from USC, focusing on land use and resource management in his dissertation “Colonizing Lands and Landscapes in the English Atlantic, c.1580 – c.1640.” During the winter term in early 2016, Pluymers will teach the course Rivers and Human History, which will include a student field trip to explore the Los Angeles River.

HSS WELCOMED ITS NEAREST ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

Assistant Professor of Economics and Mathematics

Omer Tamuz

Assistant Professor of Finance

Lawrence Jin

HSS looks forward to the arrival of three new faculty in the summer of 2016:

Assistant Professor of History

Maura Dykstra

Sarah Levine-Gronningsater

Luciano Pomatto

Assistant Professor of History

Sarah Levine-Gronningsater

Assistant Professor of Economics

Luciano Pomatto
At the division’s December 15 holiday lunch, Jean-Laurent Rosenthal presented four deserving members of the HSS family with the inaugural Brass Division Awards. The awards honor service to the division and recognize teaching, mentoring, or other activity that enhances learning among Caltech undergraduate and graduate students. Here are the winners, selected by committee (pictured above, clockwise from top left):

Administrative Assistant Barbara Estrada, for providing “excellent support to the faculty for over 10 years” and for being “a great team player who always exhibits a helpful, positive attitude.”

Weisman Postdoctoral Instructor in Medieval British Literature Ben Saltzman, whose “grateful students uniformly note his infectious energy and enthusiasm” and “appreciate the variety of activities in his lesson plan,” and for “his extensive feedback on papers.”

Assistant Professor of English Jennifer Jahner, for her “extraordinary ability to foster discussion” and “improve student writing through obligatory preparation meetings and extensive feedback.” Admiration for her teaching is best summed up by students who urge peers to take Jahner’s classes, regardless of their interest in medieval literature: “You won’t be disappointed.”

Lecturer in Japanese Kayoko Hirata, not only for her effectiveness as a Japanese language instructor in the classroom but also for her more than 20 years of leadership in Caltech’s Japan Internship Program, which offers undergraduates the opportunity to improve their language skills, learn about Japanese culture firsthand, and work in some of Japan’s leading science and technology companies.
A study by Robert Kirby Professor of Behavioral Economics Colin Camerer and others into the finances of retired professional football players found that a surprising number of them fall into bankruptcy, which disputes economic models based on the notion that people act rationally (for example, that a person anticipating an income reduction in retirement will dutifully seek to save money).

The reading by poet, critic, and journalist Amy Gerstler, who was invited to campus as part of HSS’s writer-in-residence series, funded by the James Michelin Distinguished Visitors Program, was listed as one of “L.A.’s Top Literary Events in May” in *Los Angeles Magazine*.

“Behavior Matters: Redesigning the Clinical Trial” profiles Professor of Economics and Political Science Erik Snowberg and his research into how human behavior influences the effectiveness of clinical trials for new drugs and treatments.

Caltech News and other media outlets covered the release of Rea A. and Lela G. Axline Professor of Business Economics and Professor of History Phil Hoffman’s latest book, *Why Did Europe Conquer the World?* In it, Hoffman offers new insight into the centuries-old question of why the countries of Western Europe colonized and conquered much of the rest of the world.

“Caltech Interns Summer in Japan” in Caltech News describes the experience of five undergraduate students who participated in the Japan Internship Program this past summer.

Caltech News featured an article on the third and final year of the Caltech-Huntington research program on Materialities, Texts and Images (MTI), corresponding to the arrival of the third pair of MTI Fellows, Alexandre Dubé and Cora Gilroy-Ware. In 2016, the two institutions are launching the Caltech-Huntington Humanities Collaborations (CHHC), with additional fellowships and joint-programmatic opportunities to build upon the successful foundation laid by MTI.

The fall 2015 edition of Caltech’s *Engineering & Science* includes “The Science of Economics,” which explores the long-term work of several HSS faculty—including John Ledyard, Charlie Plott, Tom Palfrey, Leeat Yariv, and Federico Echenique—that has enabled researchers to create and run laboratory experiments to test a variety of market systems involving social interactions.

A recent study from Bren Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience and Professor of Biology Ralph Adolphs’s lab was featured in the Caltech News piece “Probing the Mysterious Perceptual World of Autism.” The study, which utilized complex real-world images to investigate autism spectrum disorder, contributes to our understanding of how people with autism attend to visual cues.

**FACULTY BOOKS PUBLISHED IN 2015**

**WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**

The graduate students and postdocs who left HSS in 2015 have moved on to exciting new opportunities. Among those who received their PhD in June:

- Kyle Carlson is now a data scientist at Twitter.
- Matthew Chao is Assistant Professor of Economics at Williams College.
- Jonathan Chapman is a Max Weber Fellow at the European University Institute.
- Khai Chiong is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the USC Dornsife Institute for New Economic Thinking.
- Geoffrey Fisher is Assistant Professor of Marketing at Cornell University.
- Jaclyn Kimble is pursuing a law degree at UC Berkeley School of Law.
- Matthew Kovach is Visiting Assistant Professor of Economics at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM).
- Allyson Pellissier is an associate at the investment management firm First Quadrant.
- Kirill Pogorelsky is Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Warwick.

And, among our former postdocs:

- Cendri Hutcherson from the Rangel Lab is now Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto Scarborough.
- Sang Wan Lee from the O’Doherty Lab is now in a tenure-track position in the Department of Bio and Brain Engineering at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST).
- Christa Robbins is Assistant Professor in the McIntire Department of Art at the University of Virginia, following her two-year Mellon Caltech-Huntington Postdoctoral Instructorship in Art History.
2016 YEAR AT A GLANCE

JANUARY 26
“Gesture Recognition”
Pamela Z, Composer/Performer/Media Artist
Morteza Gharib, Vice Provost and Hans W. Liepmann Professor of Aeronautics and Professor of Bio-Inspired Engineering, Caltech
Art + Tech Speaker Series
Guggenheim 101, 5:00 p.m.

JANUARY 28
“Between the Archives and the Athenaeum: Caltech as Living History”
Daniel Kevles, Stanley Woodward Professor of History, Emeritus, Yale University; J. O. and Juliette Koepflir Professor of the Humanities, Emeritus, Caltech
50th Anniversary Lecture Series
Baxter Lecture Hall, 5:00 p.m.

FEBRUARY 1
“Giambologna (1529-1608): The First Modern Sculptor?”
Catherine Hess, Chief Curator of European Art, The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens
Materialities, Text and Images (MTI) Talk
Dabney Hall 110 (Treasure Room), 6:00 p.m.

FEBRUARY 4
Reading and talk by author Laila Lalami
Associate Professor of Creative Writing, University of California, Riverside
James Michelin Distinguished Visitors Program
Dabney Lounge, 4:00 p.m.

FEBRUARY 16
“The Genesis of General Relativity: Documented and Visualized”
Hanoch Gutfreund, Andre Aisenstadt Chair in Theoretical Physics, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
To accompany Einstein manuscript exhibit opening, Dabney Lounge, 4:00 p.m.

FEBRUARY 17
“The Iberian Voyages of Discovery and the Origin of Modern Science: A Geological Perspective”
Walter Alvarez, Professor of the Graduate School, Department of Earth and Planetary Science, University of California, Berkeley
Exploration: The Globe and Beyond Lecture Series
Noyes 147, 5:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY 23
“Body of Evidence: Tracing Photographic Identity in Victorian Law and Popular Culture”
Jennifer Tucker, Associate Professor of History and Science in Society, Wesleyan University
50th Anniversary Lecture Series
Baxter Lecture Hall, 5:00 p.m.

MARCH 10
“The Genesis and Transformations of General Relativity”
Jürgen Renn, Director, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin
Francis Bacon Award Lecture
Baxter Lecture Hall, 4:00 p.m.

MARCH 11
“100 Years of Relativity: From the Big Bang to Black Holes and Gravitational Waves”
Kip Thorne, Richard P. Feynman Professor of Theoretical Physics, Emeritus, Caltech
GR 100 Conference Public Lecture
Rothenberg Hall, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, 7:30 p.m.

MARCH 18
Second Annual Caltech/USC Private Equity Finance Conference
Sponsored by Caltech’s Ronald and Maxine Linde Institute of Economic and Management Sciences and the USC Marshall School of Business
Baxter 25, 9:00 a.m.

MARCH 31
“Publius and Political Science”
John Freirejohn, Samuel Tilden Professor of Law, New York University School of Law
50th Anniversary Lecture Series
Baxter Lecture Hall, 5:00 p.m.

APRIL 13
“Empirical Research on Research and the Reproducibility Crisis”
John Ioannidis, C. F. Rehnborg Professor in Disease and Prevention, Professor of Health Research and Policy, Stanford University
Baxter Lecture Hall, 5:00 p.m.

APRIL 15
Geraldine Heng, Perceval Fellow and Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Department of English, University of Texas at Austin
Exploration: The Globe and Beyond Lecture Series
Dabney Hall 110 (Treasure Room), 4:00 p.m.

APRIL 20
“What Columbus Discovered”
Nicolas Wey-Gomez, Professor of History, Caltech
Earnest C. Watson Lecture Series
Beckman Auditorium, 8:00 p.m.

APRIL 28
Vernon Smith, George L. Argyros Endowed Chair in Finance and Economics, Chapman University
50th Anniversary Lecture Series
Baxter Lecture Hall, 5:00 p.m.

MAY 10
“The Prosthetic Imaginary”
Sara Hendren, Artist, Design Researcher, and Assistant Professor of Design, Olin College of Engineering
Ken Pickar, Visiting Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Caltech
Art + Tech Speaker Series
Guggenheim 101, 6:00 p.m.

MAY 17
Reading by poet and novelist Ciarán Carson
Emeritus Professor of Poetry, Queen’s University Belfast
James Michelin Distinguished Visitors Program
Dabney Lounge, 7:00 p.m.

MAY 26
“Dynamics and Information Processing of Competitive Market Behavior”
Charles Plott, William D. Hacker Professor of Economics and Political Science, Caltech
50th Anniversary Lecture Series
Baxter Lecture Hall, 5:00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 29
John Sutherland, Emeritus Lord Northcliffe Professor of Modern English Literature, University College London
50th Anniversary Lecture Series
Baxter Lecture Hall, 5:00 p.m.

OCTOBER 27
Matthew Jackson, William D. Eberle Professor of Economics, Stanford University
50th Anniversary Lecture Series
Baxter Lecture Hall, 5:00 p.m.

NOVEMBER 17
“One on the Trail of Medieval Relics: Tracking Sacred Journeys”
Kate Craig, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Auburn University
50th Anniversary Lecture Series
Baxter Lecture Hall, 5:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 1
Roger Noll, Professor of Economics, Emeritus, Stanford University
50th Anniversary Lecture Series
Baxter Lecture Hall, 5:00 p.m.

Please check the HSS online calendar for the latest information about these and other events.

For questions about this newsletter and HSS in general, please email hsschair@caltech.edu.

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