About the MLA Convention

THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION CONVENTION, FIRST HELD in 1883, is an annual gathering of teachers and scholars in the field of language and literature study. The convention enables members of the profession to share their ideas and research with colleagues from other universities and colleges. The many sessions present a range of approaches and examine a variety of languages and literary and critical traditions. Sessions will be held in the Washington State Convention Center (most English sessions and some comparative literature sessions, the Job Information Center, and exhibits) and the Sheraton Seattle (most foreign language and comparative literature sessions). Sessions begin at 12:00 noon on 5 January, with job-related workshops at 8:30 and 11:45 a.m. The last sessions will end at 3:00 p.m. on 8 January.

Convention sessions are organized by MLA members, but nonmembers are welcome to attend. All participants—members and nonmembers alike—must pay registration fees. Registrants receive badges, which entitle convention attendees to gain admittance to sessions, the Job Information Center, and the exhibit hall. Registrants who lose their badges may purchase replacements at the registration area.

The Program begins with an *Individual Convention Program* for recording personal schedules. A list of *Exhibitors* displaying books and other materials during the convention and a *Floor Plan of the Exhibit Area* allow attendees to locate exhibits quickly. *Indexes* of sessions open to the public, division sessions, discussion group sessions, sessions sponsored by MLA committees and MLA programs and offices, and allied organization sessions refer the reader to the number assigned to each event listed in the *Program* proper. A *Sub-*

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ject Index to All Sessions, in which sessions are organized by topic, and an index of *Program Participants* follow. The *Program* proper, divided into chronological units (see *Contents*, on p. 1195), provides the most complete description of the various sessions. A listing of the *Executive Committees* of divisions, discussion groups, and the American Literature Section and an *Index of Advertisers* and *Index of Authors Advertised* round out the Program.

Sessions

Most sessions at the MLA convention are arranged by the membership at large, either through the association's divisions and discussion groups or by individual members. Attendance is open to all convention registrants, but only current MLA members may organize or participate formally in sessions. On occasion, the membership requirement is waived for individuals whose main interests are in other disciplines. The policies for MLA divisions and discussion groups and the procedures for organizing convention meetings are on the MLA's Web site (www.mla.org/conv_general_info). The following is a brief description of the kinds of sessions arranged for this year's convention.

Please note that as part of its continuing efforts to make the MLA Annual Convention more responsive to members' needs, the MLA Executive Council has begun the process of examining the structure of divisions, discussion groups, and allied organizations. MLA Second Vice President Marianne Hirsch has agreed to convene a small group of members who will study the current structures and make recommendations to the council on how to proceed. The council will then solicit comments from the full membership. While this study is taking place, over approximately two years, the council will not accept applications for division, discussion group, and allied organization status. Applications that were submitted before 1 May 2011 will be considered.

Division Sessions

Encompassing the primary scholarly and professional concerns of the association, MLA divisions represent major areas of membership interest. Divisions are responsible for promoting scholarly and professional activities within their areas of concern; to this end, their executive committees advise on specific research and pedagogical needs, propose to the MLA Executive Council programs that might be undertaken on behalf of their divisions, compile information of interest to their members for publication in MLA periodicals or in special mailings, and elect division representatives to serve in the MLA Delegate Assembly. Divisions may organize two guaranteed sessions and may propose up to two additional sessions. For further details, see the Procedures for Organizing Meetings on the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/conv_procedures). In any year a division's executive committee may decide to hold no program at all or to arrange a forum either alone or in conjunction with another division or a discussion group.

Only MLA members may join divisions or participate in their projects and programs. Members interested in one of next year's division programs should correspond with the 2012 secretary of the appropriate division, since 2012 secretaries become chairs in 2013 (see list of executive committee members following the *Program* proper).

Discussion Group Sessions

MLA discussion groups accommodate the scholarly and professional interests of constituencies within the association whose concern is with discrete literatures or with literary and linguistic matters that are not encompassed by one of the divisions. Like divisions, discussion groups are responsible for promoting scholarly and professional activities within their areas of concern, and thus their executive committees also advise on

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specific research and pedagogical needs and propose to the MLA Executive Council programs that might be undertaken on behalf of their groups.

Discussion groups may organize one guaranteed session and may propose up to two additional sessions. For further details, see the Procedures for Organizing Meetings on the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/conv_procedures). Members who have suggestions for next year's program or who would like to participate in that program should correspond with the 2012 secretary of the appropriate discussion group, since 2012 secretaries become chairs in 2013 (see list of executive committee members following the *Program* proper).

Forums

Arranged by divisions, discussion groups, or individual members, forums are meetings on topics of broad interest. The MLA executive director, with the assistance of the Program Committee, has final responsibility for approving forums. No more than four forums, including the Presidential Forum, may be arranged for a convention. A formal proposal that describes in detail the topic and nature of the proposed forum and includes biographical information on participants must be submitted to the executive director online by 1 April 2012.

Special Sessions

MLA members whose scholarly or professional interests are not adequately accommodated through convention programs arranged by the divisions and discussion groups may propose special sessions. Since these sessions, the most specialized of all convention meetings, are intended to enable participants to exchange ideas on specific topics, they involve a session leader and a panel of discussants. Members who wish to organize a special session for the 2013 convention should carefully read the guidelines, available on the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/conv_procedures), governing the organization of these sessions and should observe the deadlines for 2012–13 announced in the Fall *MLA Newsletter* and on the MLA Web site. Proposals for special sessions must be submitted on the forms provided for this purpose; the forms and other useful information about submitting a proposal will be available on the MLA Web site.

Allied Organization Sessions

Other scholarly, business, or social meetings are arranged in conjunction with the MLA convention by officially recognized allied organizations. Typically, these organizations are learned societies or professional associations whose purposes are closely allied with those of the MLA.

Allied organizations may organize one guaranteed session and may propose up to two additional sessions. For further details, see the Procedures for Organizing Meetings on the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/conv_procedures). Allied organizations that plan to arrange meetings at the 2013 convention must submit complete final program copy to the MLA convention office online by 1 April.

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