Please note: we propose this job search in the event that we are able to appoint candidates in both Renaissance and 19th century this year (2008). If not, we shall have to reconsider as a group the recruitment situation.

**British Literature: proposed job search in British Transnational and Transatlantic or Colonial and Postcolonial**

**Overview**
The English Department requests authorization to hire an assistant professor in British literature (any period), with a scholarly and teaching focus on transnational and transatlantic or colonial and postcolonial studies. This position responds to multiple recommendations, and will answer multiple goals, at the Department and University levels, among them:

- English Strategic Plan (December, 2006) identifies transnational literary studies (and British literature of the long 18th and long 19th centuries), as areas of research excellence to guide future hires.
- Provost’s Strategic Plan (October, 2006) recognizes goals for the University that this position’s research and teaching orientation will advance for students, namely awareness of inclusivity / diversity and internationalization / globalization.
- Student demand is high for classes in British literature of most periods and new undergraduate courses in this area (transnational and colonial) could satisfy the cross-cultural requirement in USP.

**Intellectual Orientation of the Position**
As an age of international exploration, the late 17th, 18th and 19th centuries saw the rise and fall of the slave trade, the consolidation of the British Empire as an economic and political entity, and the emergence of rebellion and colonial-nationalist activity that intensified in the 20th century. All of these developments raise complex questions about the meaning and location of “Britishness” (and related concepts of Scottishness and Irishness). It is clear that questions about transatlantic or transnational connections have a bearing on literature from the 17th through the 20th century, and the linkage between the study of empire and postcolonial studies (with its emphasis on 20th and 21st century literatures in particular) is clear. While urging a focus on transnational and colonial studies, we are leaving the period of concentration open at this stage, in hope of appointing the best candidate; members of the British TAC (Rosenman, Foreman, MacDonald, Allison, Zunshine, Kalliney, Giancarlo) are in agreement about interest in this focus.

Over the last twenty years, the importance of the British Empire has become crucial to the study of literature. Although the emergence of class consciousness and conflict was once the central narrative of this period, attention to empire has complicated this view with new understandings of British identity. Cutting across class lines to consolidate inhabitants of Great Britain in its “imagined community,” empire also splintered and dispersed national identity as people and goods traversed national boundaries. Established scholarly areas such as commodity culture and capitalism have been transformed as scholars reckon with the pervasiveness of foreign items in the British marketplace, exhibition culture, and domestic space, while new approaches such as race theory have redefined the period. Special issues of journals, conferences, and a number of recent books testify to the vitality and importance of the field. At the latest joint meeting of the national organizations of Romantic and Victorian scholars, the topic “Victorian Internationalisms” attracted so many papers it was split into four sessions, while about a third of both the Special Sessions and the Seminars consisted of work on empire. Transatlantic studies has emerged as a significant area of research in Renaissance studies, and Postcolonial and Anglophone studies in relation to 20th and 21st century literature and culture remains one of the dominant trends in modern scholarship.

Once seen as lacking a racial dimension because slavery took place “elsewhere,” in distant colonies, British literature is now seen as a place in which the material, ethical, scientific, and sexual tensions of
race and empire are formulated and contested. In addition to rethinking canonical novels, this recognition has opened up the study of new literary works such as Anglo-Indian novels, exotic adventure stories, and travel narratives, while racial anthropology and accounts of imperial conflicts are as critical to current cultural studies as the study of conduct books and urban sociology has been in established work on gender and class. In its historical and geographical reach, British literature offers unique opportunities for understanding cultural production in an international context, unfolding the long history of globalization that now defines the contemporary world, and training students in the work of global cultural economies.

**How the Position Integrates with and Strengthens English Research Excellence**

We have strong scholars who focus on empire in the Renaissance and 20th century: Professor MacDonald, whose publications on race in Renaissance drama have led to a new project on modern reworkings of Shakespeare by post-colonial writers; Professor Kalliney, who is following his first book on urban London as an interracial space with a study of how the white literary establishment embraced writers of color to revitalize modernism and Professor Allison, whose work on modern British and Irish poetry is engaged with questions of nationalism, nation-formation and counter-hegemonic identities in the context of 20th century Anglo-Irish literary and cultural relations, and the literary politics emergent during and after the foundation of the Irish state, in relation to English and Scottish cultural heritages.

**How the Position Supports and Enhances the English Teaching Mission**

Students of British literature seeking to understand the workings of empire should have a working knowledge of the literature of this extended period. Recruiting a scholar who focuses specifically on this period will allow us to increase our course offerings and thus facilitate students’ understanding of this era in which empire emerged, formal policies were established, movement of ideas and capital increased exponentially between metropole and colony, major conflicts erupted—and, importantly, textual representations by both British and colonial writers grappled with these phenomena. At the undergraduate level, this scholar’s teaching interests could manifest in new classes that could satisfy the USP cross-cultural requirement, specifically through explorations of race, diversity, and “Britishness” in colonial and metropolitan contexts. At the graduate level, this professor would enhance and strengthen our envisioned Modern British Studies concentration; in preliminary conversations, Professors Rosenman, Allison, Kalliney, and Zunshine have considered developing a course rotation in 18th, 19th, and 20th century literary studies that would trace issues such as gender and class; literacy, publishing, and authorship; nationalism, empire and race.

We would expect this professor to teach the following undergraduate courses:

- **ENG 230–233**: Introduction to Literature courses (30 students; pre-major, USP, Graduation Writing Requirement)
- **ENG 331**: British Literature I (60 students; major, USP) or **ENG 332**: British Literature II
- **ENG 333**: Studies in a British Author (30 students; major)
- **ENG 481G**: Studies in British Literature (30 students; major)
- **ENG 484G**: Studies in Comparative Literature (30 students; major)
- **ENG 487G**: Cultural Studies (30 students; major)

Depending on his or her specialty, this professor might also teach existing upper-division undergraduate courses in gender, diasporic literature, and literary theory. At the graduate level, this professor might teach existing classes on the Renaissance, 18th, 19th or 20th century, race, empire, and theory. Finally, we would also encourage this professor to develop new undergraduate classes that would satisfy the USP cross-cultural requirement, and new graduate classes that would inspire original and exciting dissertation topics among graduate students.