

## The Write Stuff

Launched in 2007 by English professor Cindy Weinstein, the creative-writer-in-residence program most recently welcomed Irish poet and Pulitzer Prize winner Paul Muldoon to campus, as a complement to English professor Kevin Gilmartin's course on modern and contemporary Irish literature. The program, which has existed through support from the Provost's Innovative Teaching Fund, now has ongoing support from the Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences through the James Michelin Distinguished Visitor Program.

"Students know the challenges of understanding the universe, from the point of view of chemistry or physics. The writers who come to Caltech will show students how literature addresses these challenges as well," says Weinstein. "The creative process is both different

Ezekiel, meanwhile, was convinced that Creative Writing, still in its infancy, would amount

to a bona fide academic pursuit only if students weren't spoon-fed but came to think of literature as magical rather than magisterial.

*Paul Muldoon, "Saffron"*

from and analogous to doing an experiment in a science lab," she adds. "Students welcome the opportunity to meet someone like Paul who explains how one writes poetry."

For Muldoon, who visited Gilmartin's classes and met with students in humanities classes, the experience was equally rewarding. "For writers the idea that anyone might be interested in reading their work at all always comes as a bit of a surprise, and the idea that some of these students might actually have been prepared for the visit is

quite heartening," he says.

Weinstein hopes to have a few visitors each year—one per quarter—to teach or sit in on classes, do public readings, or come for a week and write.

"My hope is that Caltech will become known as an excellent place for writers to come and be exposed to really smart students. The goal of this program is that Caltech becomes a destination for creative writers, especially writers whose work demonstrates a link between science and literature," says Weinstein. —AA