Biography

Elisa New is the Powell M. Cabot Professor of American Literature at Harvard University where she teaches classic American literature from Anne Bradstreet through Marilynne Robinson and from the Puritans to the present day. After receiving her B.A. from Brandeis University in 1980 and her Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1988, she taught at the University of Pennsylvania for ten years before coming to Harvard in 1999.

Professor New is the author of The Regenerate Lyric: Theology and Innovation in American Poetry (Cambridge University Press, 1992), The Lines Eye: Poetic Experience, American Sight (Harvard University Press, 1999), and Jacob's Cane: A Jewish Family's Journey from the Four Lands of Lithuania to the Ports of London and Baltimore (2009). Her forthcoming book is New England Beyond Criticism: Rereading America's First Literature: A Blackwell Manifesto (Wiley Blackwell, 2014) and she is now at work on a companion to her online Harvardx course How to Read American Poetry (Wiley Blackwell, 2015). Selected modules from her Harvardx course, "Poetry in America" will launch in the Fall of 2013. The full course will launch in 2014.

In recently published essays, Professor New has explored Stanley Cavell and the poetry of William Carlos Williams, the poetry of Susan Howe, America's "Victorians" (Longfellow, Whitman, Dickinson, Melville), and the "last acts" of Philip Roth and Harold Bloom. Essays in preparation include a study of the poet Allen Grossman, an exploration of the racial theories of Frank Norris, and an article on Jewish public intellectuals. Professor New is also working on a novel, a campus mystery, entitled Memorial Minute.