“His superiority over other learned men consisted chiefly in what may be called the art of thinking, the art of using his mind; a certain continual power of seizing the useful substance of all that he knew, and exhibiting it in a clear and forcible manner; so that knowledge which we often see to be no better than lumber in men of dull understanding, was, in him, true, evident, and actual wisdom.”

- Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LLD*
2009 is the tercentenary of the birth of Samuel Johnson, one of the great writers of eighteenth-century England, and, along with Montaigne, Shakespeare, Goethe, Tolstoy, and Borges, one of a handful of humanists in the European tradition whose writings in a variety of genres continue to challenge and extend our philosophical, moral and literary experiences.

The Bucknell Humanities Institute, supported by the Office of the Provost, will commemorate Johnson’s life and work, his contribution to the western literary tradition, to the American tradition of liberal education, and to his continuing place in the curriculum on college campuses such as Bucknell. On March 23-24, 2009 Bucknell will host a number of events to which students, faculty, trustees, invitees, staff, alumni, and the public will be welcome.

Provisional list of events

- Lectures by Christopher Ricks and Leo Damrosch.
- Poetry reading by David Ferry.
- Public discussion about Johnson, literature and criticism today with Christopher Ricks, Leo Damrosch, Greg Clingham, Philip Smallwood, Adam Rounce, and others.
- Exhibit of Johnsonian books and artifacts in the Bertrand Library.
- Reception and dinner.
- Luncheon and discussion with students.
- Dramatic reading of (scenes from) G.K. Chesterton’s play *The Judgment of Dr. Johnson* (1927).
- A Bucknell University Press publication commemorating the event.

The Lecturers

