



Jonathan Culler, English, Arts & Sciences

Jonathan Culler came to Cornell in 1977 and in 1982 succeeded M. H. Abrams as Class of 1916 Professor of English and Comparative Literature. A 1966 graduate of Harvard, he won a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford where he took a B. Phil in Comparative Literature and a D. Phil. in Modern Languages. He was subsequently Fellow in French at Selwyn College, Cambridge, and then University Lecturer in French and Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, before moving to Cornell. He teaches courses on literary theory and criticism, French literature, and English poetry.

Numerous books on literary theory and criticism, especially *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature* and *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*, have established his reputation as a lucid analyst and expositor of complex ideas. In addition to a book on the novels of Gustave Flaubert and brief introductions to linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and to theorist Roland Barthes, Culler has published three collections of essays, most recently *The Literary in Theory*. His *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* has been translated into some 20 languages, including Tamil, Latvian, and Kurdish, and was reissued in an expanded edition in 2011.

Culler has at various times chaired the departments of English, Comparative Literature, and Romance Studies at Cornell, and served as Director of the Society for the Humanities (1984-93) and Senior Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences (2000-2003). He has been President of both the American Semiotic Society and the American Comparative Literature Association and currently serves on the Board of the American Council of Learned Societies and the New York State Council for the Humanities. He has held Guggenheim and NEH fellowships and has been elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society.

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Statement:

I have taught at Cornell for 35 years and chaired several departments. Stints as Director of the Society for the Humanities and as Senior Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences have broadened my horizons beyond my departments; and service on university committees over these many years, including the Strategic Planning Task Force in 2009-10, the Library Board, a Task Force on Graduate Education, and the University Faculty Committee, have at least helped me know how much I don't know about the varied parts of the University. At this juncture, when the Trustees' attention is likely to focus on the Cornell-NYC Tech enterprise, on applied science and engineering and technology transfer, I am eager to remind them as often as possible of the needs of the Ithaca campus, the wealth of important research underway in Ithaca that is not commercializable, and the centrality of undergraduate teaching.