

Princeton University

Honors Faculty Members
Receiving Emeritus Status



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The biographical sketches were written by
colleagues in the departments of those honored.

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Faculty Members Receiving Emeritus Status

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Stanley Alan Corngold



Stanley Alan Corngold, professor of German and comparative literature, was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1934. His undergraduate study at Columbia University was punctuated by two years of service in the U.S. Army; he graduated from Columbia with special distinction in English in 1957. His postgraduate transition toward the study of German and comparative literature took place at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, where he studied Sanskrit, and again at Columbia, where he studied German. After teaching as an instructor in the European Division of the University of Maryland, he entered the Ph.D. program in comparative literature at Cornell University. He received his doctorate in 1968 with a dissertation on Rousseau and Kant directed by Paul de Man, Robert M. Adams, and O. Matthijs Jolles. Stanley's first academic appointment came in 1966 as assistant professor of Germanic languages and literatures at Princeton. He was promoted to the rank of associate professor in 1972, and was named associate professor of comparative literature in 1979. He has served as professor of German and comparative literature since 1981.

Stanley's achievement and influence in the fields of German and comparative literature can hardly be overestimated. He is the author of six books and more than 100 articles; he has also translated or edited a further six volumes. He is best known as an authority on the great 20th-century author Franz Kafka—his work has changed our view of Kafka more than that of any single scholar of the last 40 years. His earliest work on Kafka, and especially the article "Metamorphosis of the Metaphor" (1973) is the key to any understanding of the textuality of Kafka's work. Stanley went on to produce a Kafka trilogy: *The Commentator's*

Despair (1973), *Franz Kafka: The Necessity of Form* (1990), and *Lambent Traces: Franz Kafka* (2004), all which have opened Kafka's depths to generations of students and general readers.

Yet Stanley's range and influence is not limited to one author. As good as the Kafka books are, his most influential single work is perhaps *The Fate of the Self: German Writers and French Theory* (1986). In a magisterial study of German literature and philosophy between 1800 and 1950, he presents a compelling case for considering German writers and modern French theory together. Stanley's work staked out the terrain for a whole new approach to the field. This, book, too, has a kind of sequel. *Complex Pleasure: Forms of Feeling in German Literature* (1998) moves again over that broad terrain, adding new authors, new literary and philosophical problems, and a new, historically conscious approach to literature.

In fact, his books only suggest a fraction of Stanley's range. His essays examine philosophers such as Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Dilthey, Freud, Benjamin, Adorno, and Heidegger, and writers such as Lessing, Goethe, Hölderlin, Stendhal, Flaubert, Mann, Kraus, Sebald, Kosinski, and Coetzee. And his treatments of theoretical issues have been widely admired and persistently influential: Stanley is a leading figure not just in poststructuralist thought, but in hermeneutics, narratology, and psychoanalytic criticism as well.

Stanley has, for decades, served as one of Princeton's most influential teachers of the humanities. Courses such as "The Romantic Quest" and "Forms of Excitement" have long been on the "must-take list" for every talented Princetonian with aesthetic inclinations. He is the kind of highly individualized, memorable classroom presence of which we frankly have far too few. And he has reshaped the reading habits and reading ability of hundreds of students over the years. There is, moreover, hardly a leading German department in North America without a Princeton

Ph.D., and virtually all of them have been marked by Stanley's graduate teaching. His advisees have consistently been among the department's most sophisticated and accomplished graduates, and have gone on to distinguished positions in our field. It is in fact very difficult to think of a more influential trainer of young scholars in North America. In 2009, he was honored with the Howard T. Behrman Award for Distinguished Achievement in the Humanities.

All of this achievement has been extravagantly recognized outside Princeton: Stanley has won ACLS, Fulbright, Guggenheim, and NEH fellowships; been named visiting fellow at the Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften in Vienna and at the American Academy in Berlin; and served as a distinguished visiting scholar throughout North America and Europe.