

## **Word from the Director 2013-2014**

*Paul Fleming*

For over two decades, the Institute for German Cultural Studies (IGCS) has thrived as a research-driven hub for the exchange of ideas and scholarship on German literature, philosophy, history, art, and politics in their larger European and global contexts.

Consciously interdisciplinary in its scope and aim, the IGCS brings together students, scholars, writers, and artists in a variety of formats: the 5-6 colloquia per semester, with pre-distributed essays and two hours of intensive discussion, are a model for the type of critical, intellectual engagement the Institute fosters since its inception; the IGCS additionally organizes 1-2 international conferences per year with recent topics ranging from “Futurity Now” and “Memoryscapes + Imageworlds” to “Tragic Legacies” and “The Poet and the University” (in Fall 2014); day-long workshops often hone in on a single author (e.g., Marcuse) or idea (“Critical Theory and [post]Colonialism”); readings and compact seminars by authors and artists bring the most creative minds from German-speaking countries to the Cornell community; co-sponsored films and concerts take place throughout the year; and the DAAD Faculty Summer Seminar offers a six-week intensive seminar each summer for colleagues and recent PhDs.

The robust faculty exchanges with the German Department at Berlin’s Humboldt University and the “Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture” at the Justus-Liebig University Giessen continue to flourish; for over 20 years, visiting scholars with expertise in medieval studies to contemporary literature and media are at Cornell from the Humboldt University in the fall and from Giessen in the spring. We hope to enhance these dynamic exchanges with new partners in Germany, both on the faculty and graduate student level.

As the IGCS moves toward its 25<sup>th</sup> year, we see no reason to slow down but to continue the innovative legacy of excellence set by directors Peter Uwe Hohendahl and Leslie Adelson. We have re-designed the website and coupled it with an e-newsletter that contains announcements of upcoming programming as well as regular reporting on events shortly after they happened. This ongoing interface between website and e-newsletter — with updates, announcements, and reporting — serves as the main, up-to-the-minute organ of the Institute. The e-sources of

information are complemented by a print version of “German Cultural News,” now on a yearly (Fall) basis, which documents the previous year’s program and highlights the coming year’s offerings.

There is also a sponsored reading group on Contemporary German Literature that meets several times per term. And since Peter Uwe Hohendahl’s retirement from Cornell (2011) we are very proud to hold a yearly Graduate Student Essay Prize in his honor that recognizes his legacy in critical thought.

Please take the time to browse the IGCS website for all that is going on: colloquia, conferences, workshops, visiting scholars, concerts, and films as well as reports on recent events. The IGCS is eager and open to partner in exciting, multi-disciplinary events; if you have ideas or suggestions, please feel free to contact me.

I hope to see you at IGCS events throughout the year!