

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

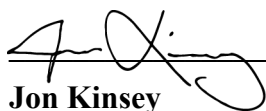
Julia C. Hell, Ph.D., professor of Germanic languages and literatures in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, retired from active faculty status on December 31, 2025.

Professor Hell received her B.A. (1981), M.A. (1983), and Ph.D. (1989) degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She joined the faculty of Duke University as an assistant professor in 1989 and entered the faculty of the University of Michigan as associate professor in 1997. In 2012, she was promoted to professor.

Professor Hell is a preeminent, internationally recognized scholar in the fields of German Studies, classical reception, ruin studies, the histories of modern literature, empire, and fascism. Her prize-winning first book *Post-Fascist Fantasies: Psychoanalysis, History and the Literature of East Germany* (1997) broke new ground in the study of post-socialist Europe. The book's crucial contribution lay in probing the antifascist foundational narrative of GDR culture through psychoanalytically informed readings of its gendered, temporal, and sublime discursive structure. With the co-edited volume *Ruins of Modernity* (2010), Professor Hell's research substantially broadened towards the reception of classical thought and to embrace transnational approaches to the study of ruins. That work culminated in the magisterial monograph *The Conquest of Ruins: The Third Reich and the Fall of Rome* (2019), which made field-defining interventions in political theory, the history of empire and fascism, the history of art and literature, intellectual history, and classics. In this book, Professor Hell advanced a notion of neo-Roman mimesis to show how closely modern empires adhere to the violent logic of imperial time as borrowed, a logic endlessly reproduced in scopic scenarios of "ruin-gazing" and symbolic returns to the Roman empire "with the end in mind." Professor Hell's book culminates in a compelling analysis of the Third Reich as history's most extreme form of neo-Roman mimesis. Subsequently, Professor Hell revisited Peter Weiss's *The Aesthetics of Resistance*. A co-edited volume, *Overcoming the Present: Peter Weiss's Material Aesthetics* is forthcoming, and a monograph on Weiss will follow. Professor Hell served as the chair of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures from 2008 to 2010. She was a trusted teacher and advisor to a generation of undergraduate and graduate students in German studies and comparative literature.

The Regents now salute this distinguished scholar by naming **Julia Hell, professor emerita of Germanic languages and literatures**.

Requested by:



Jon Kinsey
Vice President and Secretary of the University

November 2025