



April 6, 2005



### Passings: Professor Richard K. Simon

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Richard K. "Dick" Simon, Director of Humanities and English Professor at Cal Poly since 1988, passed away April 4, 2005, surrounded by his family after a courageous battle with cancer.

Simon, 60, had chaired the Humanities program in the College of Liberal Arts since 1995. A well known and well-liked professor, colleagues and faculty alike remember him for his lecture-appropriate hats. The English Department faculty posed in March for a group photo -- all wearing hats in his honor -- and gave the photo to Simon as a gift.



Simon is survived by his wife, Kathy, and son, Noah. The College of Liberal Arts hosted a memorial celebration of his life April 10 in the Orfalea College of Business Rotunda, with a reception following in the rose garden.

Professor Simon grew up in Philadelphia, Penn., was educated in the public schools there, and graduated with a BA and MA from the University of Michigan. He taught humanities at Northern Michigan and Western Michigan Universities, earned a Ph.D. in Modern Thought and Literature at Stanford University (1977), and taught at the University of California, San Diego, and at the University of Texas at Austin before joining the Cal Poly faculty in 1988.

His teaching interests included great books and modern novels, 18th and 20th century British and American literature, popular culture, and the movies. In 1996, he won the Cal Poly Distinguished Teaching Award.

Simon wrote two books: "Trash Culture: Popular Culture and the Great Tradition" (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999,) and "The Labyrinth of the Comic: Theory and Practice from Fielding to Freud" (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1986). He also wrote a number of scholarly articles on

Sigmund Freud, Samuel Beckett, E.M. Forster , Joseph Conrad, Nathanael West, John Kennedy Toole, advertising, tabloid newspapers, and shopping malls, among other topics

"Trash Culture" is available in hardback and paperback and has been translated into Chinese and published in Beijing.

For information on memorials or scholarships, contact Terry San Filippo in the College of Liberal Arts at [tsanfili@calpoly.edu](mailto:tsanfili@calpoly.edu).

- ### -

---

[CP Home](#) • [CP Find It](#) • [Get Adobe Reader](#) • [Microsoft Viewers](#)

**[Events](#) • [Recent Releases](#) • [Cal Poly Magazine](#) • [Cal Poly Update E-newsletter](#) • [Contact Public Affairs](#) • [Alumni](#) • [Giving](#) • [Athletics](#)**

**Cal Poly Public Affairs**  
California Polytechnic State University  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407  
805.756.7266  
[polynews@calpoly.edu](mailto:polynews@calpoly.edu)