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## UM lecture examines decline of 'serious culture'

University of Montana--Missoula. Office of University Relations

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

April 24, 2003

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### **UM LECTURE EXAMINES DECLINE OF 'SERIOUS CULTURE'**

#### **MISSOULA—**

Harvard English Professor Robert Brustein will examine pop culture's assault on the serious artist during the final installment of the 2002-03 President's Lecture Series at The University of Montana.

Brustein, the drama critic for the New Republic, will present "The Four Horsemen of the Cultural Apocalypse: The State of the Arts at the Present Time" at 8 p.m. Monday, May 5, in the University Theatre.

The free event is UM's Lucile Speer Memorial Lecture, presented in conjunction with the Department of English and School of Fine Arts, which honors the former documents librarian who retired from UM in 1968 after 40 years at the University. Speer was a delegate to the 1972 Montana Constitutional Convention and was awarded an honorary doctorate in humane letters from UM in 1977. She died in 1987.

Brustein will discuss how serious culture seems to be declining in the United States, assailed from the left, the right and the center of the ideological spectrum. He argues that moral, political and aesthetic correctness are making it difficult for artists to work in a climate of free expression. Are we doomed to a future totally dominated by popular culture or is there still room for serious work in literature, theater, music, dance and publishing?

Also on May 5, Brustein will present a faculty and graduate student seminar titled

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"Profit vs. Nonprofit Theatre" from 3:10 to 4:30 p.m. in Gallagher Business Building Room

122.

Brustein is the author of 13 books on theater and society, including last year's "The Siege of the Arts." A past dean of the Yale Drama School, he was the founding director of the Yale Repertory Theatre and the American Repertory Theatre, and he directed the Loeb Drama Center for 20 years.

He has supervised more than 200 productions -- acting in eight and directing 12, including some of his own adaptations. He also has written 11 adaptations for the American Repertory Theatre.

Brustein is the recipient of many coveted awards, including the George Polk Award in journalism, the Elliot Norton Award for professional excellence in Boston theater and the New England Theater Conference's 1985 Annual Award for outstanding creative achievement in American theater. He also was recently inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame.

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