



Michael Fontaine, Classics, Arts & Sciences

Michael Fontaine is an associate professor in the Department of Classics. He came to Cornell in 2004 after a year at Amherst College, where he taught while finishing his Ph.D. in Classics at Brown University. His scholarly specialization is the Latin language and literature of the late Roman Republic, particularly its drama. He has published a book on jokes, wordplay, and textual criticism in the comedies of Plautus (254-184 BC). He is now co-editing a handbook of Greek and Roman comedy and is completing an edition and translation of a neo-Latin play by a 17th c. German priest that he rediscovered in Copenhagen in summer 2010. His teaching includes courses on the gamut of classical Latin authors and, for undergraduates, a course on paranoia and conspiracy theory in ancient Greece and Rome.

He has handled a number of administrative responsibilities within the Classics department. He has been Director of Graduate Studies since 2011, and he was Director of Undergraduate Studies from 2005-06 and again from 2008-10. Since joining the faculty in 2004 he has served as Cornell's representative to several international study-abroad programs in Italy and Greece, having lived and studied in both countries previously. He also takes an active interest in meeting students from across the university. From 2004 through 2009 he led Cornell's conversational Latin group, and he is currently a fellow of the Alice Cook House. In January 2012 he taught a mini-seminar on the Roman historian Sallust at Telluride House. Originally from outside New Orleans, he received his B.A. in Classics at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi. He lives in Ithaca with his wife, daughter, and two Maltese dogs.

Statement:

As its 150th anniversary approaches, Cornell faces some exciting opportunities and daunting challenges. Despite cutbacks in state and federal funding and an operating budget that is not yet in balance, we must recruit hundreds of new faculty, provide financial aid to our students, and build a new campus in New York City. If elected Associate Dean I will do everything I can to assist the Dean, members of the Faculty Senate, and colleagues throughout the University in fostering a robust and open dialogue with the administration, and representing our interests and our concerns fairly and effectively.

I also look forward to using my experience in the Faculty Senate – and my widening circle of associations and friendships with colleagues - to carry out the four other responsibilities that the position entails: (1) chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee; (2) ex officio membership on each University Faculty and Senate committee; (3) supervision of minutes and records of the University Faculty and Senate; and (4) supervision of publications made in the name of the University Faculty.