

**Robert Germany**, Associate Professor of Classics at Haverford College, died suddenly on March 7th, 2017, a devastating loss to his family, friends, colleagues, and students. He was a person for whom teaching, scholarship, conversation with colleagues, and talk around the family dinner table were very much of a piece, rooted in and nourished by his intellectual curiosity, his love of learning, his deep affection for languages, and his desire to share all of these. He was a great sharer, and it was impossible to talk with Robert for any length of time, whatever the subject, without learning something new.

Robert held a B.A in Classics from the University of Texas, with minors in German and Mathematics, and a PhD in Classics from the University of Chicago. He came to Haverford in the fall of 2008, after having taught for two years at Trinity University.

Robert's was an exceptional mind, distinguished by immense love, belief, and integrity. His book *Mimetic Contagion*, published this fall by Oxford University Press, is a work of great richness, which uses a particular episode in one Roman comedy to explore ancient concepts of the mimetic and its effects, and in so doing offers new insights into the Roman theatrical tradition, ideas about representation and the viewer in the visual arts, cultural constructions of sexual behavior, and the history of classical scholarship. His most recent work includes a series of brilliant essays on aspects of space and time in Roman theatre and in other cultural arenas, among them "The Unity of Time in Menander" (A. Sommerstein, ed., *Menander in Contexts*, Routledge, 2014), "Civic Reassignment of Space in the Truculentus," (F. Montanari and A. Rengakos, eds. *Trends in Classics*, De Gruyter, 2015), and "All the World's a Stage: Contemplatio Mundi in Early Roman Theater" (P. Horky, *Cosmos in the Ancient World*, Cambridge, forthcoming). Some of these looked forward to his next project, a wide-ranging investigation (and recuperation) of the unity of time in ancient and modern drama, in theory, and in classical scholarship.

As a reader of Roman Comedy, Robert believed that a sufficient response to the plays of Plautus and Terence required as much knowledge of the Farrelly Brothers and Buster Keaton as of Shakespeare and Wilde. Describing Roman Comedy is easy, but appreciating it deeply and making it relevant a greater challenge. Robert believed that understanding ancient comedy required one to be an active practitioner of it, and of the kindred arts of music (including dance and poetry), psychology, and aesthetics. Robert always read Latin and Greek out loud, even while alone; and when reading dramatic or poetic texts in the presence of others, he danced and sang out the lines — the only distraction being the Oxford Classical Text cupped in his hand.

Robert was of the Aristotelian conviction that such practices in the arts would make one a better person: the secret to his celebrated teaching was his core belief, never once doubted, that human goodness arises out of truly committed study, body and soul. 'Metatheater' emerged as the instrument of his scholarship precisely because Robert believed that the performance had a power over the audience just as it did over the performer. He referred to this the relationship as the 'logic of art and life' (the last words of his monograph), marked by the concept of 'mimetic contagion', in which audiences abandon their own personal agency to imitate the illusions they see on the stage — life contaminated, as it were, by performance. This could work for explaining the spread of vice, but also of virtue. Hence, it mattered deeply to him to model performances of excellence, in his teaching and in his daily life.

Students responded to Robert's passion and recognized him for the polymath he was: he knew all about everything, and his wide-ranging and playful intelligence showed the apparently tangential to be germane and revelatory. He was both a mesmerizing lecturer and a gifted leader of discussion, whose encouragement and skillful direction gave students the delight of finding in themselves the capacity to

arrive at conclusions that pulled everything together. He would listen to students with glee, praising them for making their point, before telling them they had it exactly backwards. As he then showed them what they had not considered or not known their look of shock would be replaced by a smile. Students found him wise as well as learned, possessed of grace and humor. He came at things from unexpected angles and showed them how this could be done; he taught them what it meant to be human. They presented hilarious performances of Roman comedy under his guidance and in his superbly actable translations, and flocked to his home for reading groups, study sessions, meals, cookies and conversation.

A supportive, affectionate, and ever-enlivening colleague, Robert was a mainstay of Haverford's happy Classics department and of its cordial collaboration with Bryn Mawr, and a welcome contributor to the bi-college program in Comparative Literature. His impassioned yet always thoughtful and nuanced approach was invaluable when there were difficult tasks at hand or hard decisions to make. At weekly meetings of the Classics Department he brought the same genial spirit to everything on the table: the latest administrative requirements, pedagogy, movies, novels, and lunch. It was Robert's suggestion that these meetings should include occasional 10-minute presentations on something a department member had been working on or thinking about; this proved a terrific addition, and Robert could be counted on for perceptive and generous comments on his colleagues' work. He participated enthusiastically in the life of the college at every level; nothing was ever a chore. He was a longtime member of the faculty-staff reading group, which at the time of his death was making its way through a series of travel narratives, chosen by Robert, who had been inspired by the work of Patrick Leigh Fermor. He had himself only recently returned from a delightful yearlong sabbatical journey through many countries, from Ethiopia to the U.K., with his wife Dianna, his children, Grace, Ada, Elias, and Jack, and his mother Elizabeth, and was happy to be home.

A memorial service will be held in Founders Hall at Haverford College on Saturday, April 1 at 2 p.m. His family is working with Haverford to establish a fund in Robert's memory to support students who wish to learn classical languages. Gifts to the memorial fund can be made at [www.haverford.edu/makeagift](http://www.haverford.edu/makeagift) (please indicate in "Special Instructions" that the gift is in memory of Robert). Please address all inquiries to Bret Mulligan ([bmulliga@haverford.edu](mailto:bmulliga@haverford.edu)).