

**History:** Town Meets Gown: Exploring the Interwoven History of Ithaca & Cornell | The 2026 Ralph Janis Seminar in History

**Faculty:** Corey Ryan Earle '07, Visiting Lecturer in American Studies, University Historian

**Faculty:** Evan Fay Earle '02, MS '14, Dr. Peter J. Thaler '56 University Archivist

**Faculty:** Benjamin Sandberg, MPA '17, Executive Director, The History Center in Tompkins County

**Week Two:** July 12 – 18, 2026

**Schedule:** Monday - Friday, 9-12 and 1:30-3:30; no class Wednesday afternoon.

**Location:** Kroch Library, Rare & Manuscript Collections and The History Center of Tompkins County

Dear CAU Participants,

We're excited to be returning for our fifth CAU summer and our fifth deep dive into Cornell University's history and culture! This year, we're looking beyond campus at Ithaca and Tompkins County with "Town Meets Gown: Exploring the Interwoven History of Ithaca & Cornell." The symbiotic relationship between campus and community has shaped both, and we'll aim to give you a new sense of "PLACE" by covering aspects of local People, Land, Architecture, Culture, and Enterprise.

Our three instructors each bring expertise in aspects of local history and culture:

- Corey Ryan Earle '07 is the de facto Cornell University historian and former board chair of The History Center in Tompkins County, where he helped develop local walking tours.
- Evan Fay Earle '02, MS '14, is the Dr. Peter J. Thaler '56 University Archivist at Cornell, where he oversees the collecting, cataloguing, and accessibility of Cornell's archives.
- Benjamin Sandberg, MPA '17, joins the Earle brothers as our new co-instructor. He's served as executive director of The History Center in Tompkins County since 2019 and is a member of the board of directors for the Downtown Ithaca Alliance. Ben brings incredible enthusiasm for local history, and his expertise in museum management and community engagement will enrich the course.

We plan to spend Monday and Friday in the Rare and Manuscript Collections of Kroch Library, underneath the Arts Quad. This space is tightly climate-controlled, so even on a hot day, be prepared for cooler temperatures and dress appropriately. On Tuesday through Thursday, the class heads downtown to The History Center, where Ben and his staff will guide us through their collections and exhibits. Throughout the week, we'll take walking tours and field trips to visit historic locations. Be prepared for walking. (Given the unpredictability of Ithaca weather, we recommend an umbrella!)

Lunches are on your own, but we plan to make ourselves available to eat lunch with the class for anyone interested in "office hours." Nearby lunch locations will be recommended each day to maximize convenience in coordination with our field trips.

Besides an umbrella, please bring your own experiences and perspectives, as well as plenty of questions to foster engaging conversations about the material and topics. We look forward to exploring local history with you.

See you in July!

**Corey Ryan Earle '07**  
Visiting Lecturer,  
American Studies Program

**Evan Fay Earle '02, MS '14**  
Dr. Peter J. Thaler '56  
Cornell University Archivist

**Benjamin Sandberg, MPA '17**  
Executive Director,  
The History Center in Tompkins County