

# Syracuse University

## Humanities Center

Year-End Report - 2023-2024





## From the Director

Vivian M. May, Ph.D.

Highlighting how the humanities are pivotal to fostering a more just, sustainable world is, perhaps, most visibly accomplished through our [Syracuse Symposium](#) public events series, now into its third decade. The “Landscapes” theme selected by our advisory board for the 2023-2024 season generated rich opportunities to examine issues of human rights, youth literacy, reproductive autonomy, the preservation of communities and family histories, Indigenous art and more, through activities and lively discussions.

As one of seven [key research entities on campus](#), we also play a central role in the ‘knowledge landscape’ by advancing humanities scholarship. This year’s [Dissertation](#) and [Faculty](#) Fellows and Humanities New York [graduate student](#) project grantees contributed vibrant work to their respective fields while collaborating generously as a cohort. In addition to completing book projects, articles, and publicly-engaged projects, these scholars engaged with each other’s research and with interested audiences through our virtual “Meet the Scholars Coffee Hour” series. Thanks to shared support from the [Office of Research](#) and the [College of Arts and Sciences](#), we also launched a new, highly-competitive opportunity for [Engaged Humanities Postdocs](#): following a rigorous search, [two inaugural appointees](#) begin their two-year [2024-2026] fellowships this summer.

As an inclusive research center, building scholarly community is core to our mission. For instance, our 9<sup>th</sup> annual [Books in the Humanities](#) initiative celebrated ©2023 releases by 40 Syracuse University students, staff, and faculty. In recognition of Black History Month, campus community volunteers helped digitize records from the Frederick Douglass archives as part of this year’s “[Douglass Day Transcribe-a-Thon](#).” We welcomed Māori philosopher Krushil Watene to campus as 2024’s [Jeannette K. Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities](#). We also provided points of connection and collaboration across our region through [CNY Humanities Corridor](#) working group funding, an annual writing retreat, a highly successful NEH regional site visit, and free research support workshops through the year. Deepening our partnership with the College’s research team and the Office of Research, we supported a third cycle of Book Manuscript Workshop awards to a cohort of tenure-line A&S faculty.

The following pages offer greater detail about these initiatives. Your questions and ideas are always welcome: [humcenter@syr.edu](mailto:humcenter@syr.edu)

# The Wide Lens

## A first glance

Overall, Humanities Center support and publicity connected campus community audiences to more than 100 activities in AY24:

- 26 free public [Syracuse Symposium](#) events across [Fall](#) and [Spring](#) semesters;
- 40 [co-sponsored activities](#), ranging from lectures and book talks to workshops, films, exhibits, and performances;
- 7 opportunities to meet and learn from our [Jeannette K. Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor](#), Krushil Watene;
- 28 [CNY Humanities Corridor-supported public activities](#) hosted by Syracuse University organizers;
- 4 major Corridor-wide research support offerings: [Minnowbrook Writing Retreat](#); [Open Access Publishing](#) roundtable; [NEH site visit](#) by [Claudia Kinkela](#) (pictured below), and an NCFDD [“Every Summer Needs a Plan”](#) workshop.

Activity hosts came from 7 different Syracuse University Schools and Colleges, the Office of Research (via key collaborations with [Sarah Workman](#)), SU Libraries, the Coalition of Museums and Arts Centers (CMAC), as well as community partners at Syracuse Stage, Society for New Music, and the Syracuse YMCA Downtown Writers Center. Keep reading for more examples of this vital work!



## In good company

Departments and programs from across Syracuse University benefitted from our role as a central hub for humanities research and collaboration. Our support helped expand awareness and participation for their initiatives, including:

- Presentations by [Atrocity Studies](#) and the [Ganders Lecture Series](#) in the [School of Education](#);
- A [CRS lecture](#) and [Geek/Art CONfluence](#) originating in the [College of Visual and Performing Arts](#);
- [Indian dance performance](#) hosted by [Falk College](#) and [Art and Music Histories](#) collaborators;
- A History department [book talk](#) and [poetry readings](#) in the [Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs](#);
- Partnered research support offerings with [Syracuse University Libraries](#), [Academic Affairs](#), and the [Office of Research](#);
- Numerous humanities events hosted by [College of Arts & Sciences](#) departments; browse our [online calendar](#) for details!

**74%** of our year-end survey respondents said their HC-sponsored event **involved students** and/or enhanced their teaching

**48%** of respondents told us their HC-supported efforts inspired subsequent projects or **led to new collaborations**

**30%** of respondents said their HC-supported work attracted **external recognition**, news coverage, or grant support

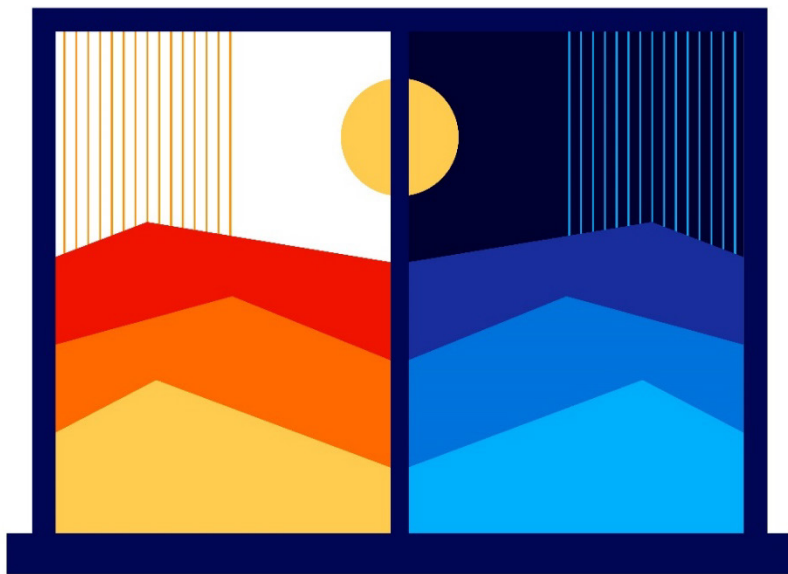


# Syracuse Symposium

Our 'Landscapes' series foregrounded visual and natural worlds that surround us but also touched on politics, constructed realities, and immersive artificial and imagined worlds. Our Symposium partners invited acclaimed artists, filmmakers, educators, archivists, environmentalists, writers, poets, and other thinkers to bring us together as a community to explore this compelling theme.

We would like to thank the Associate Provost for Strategic Initiatives for investing in Syracuse Symposium, recognizing its important role in fostering publicly-engaged arts and humanities work. This new additional support enhances our capacity to host a broadly inclusive, year-long, public-facing series.

Browse the year's complete line-up—and past themes—at the [Syracuse Symposium page of our website](#).



# LANDSCAPES

Syracuse Symposium 2023-2024

## Guest presenters included:

[Julie Bargmann](#) (FASLA; D.I.R.T. Studio Founder)

[Sophia Chai](#) (Rochester, NY artist)

[Camille Dungy](#) (Colorado State University)

[Shoshanna Ehrlich](#) (University of Massachusetts)

[Jared Farmer](#) (University of Pennsylvania)

[Jack Halberstam](#) (Columbia University)

[Thomas Allen Harris](#) (Yale University)

[Peter B. Jones](#) (Onondaga Nation artist)

[Sequoia Kemp](#) (Sankofa Health & Healing Center)

[Anna Arabindon Kesson](#) (Princeton University)

[Angelo Madsen Minax](#) (filmmaker)

[Timothy Morton](#) (Rice University)

[Kimala Price](#) (San Diego State University)

[Gil Rocha](#) (Laredo Center for the Arts)

[Melissa Shube](#) (Planned Parenthood)

[Edna Tan](#) (University of North Carolina at Greensboro)

[Augusta Read Thomas](#) (University of Chicago)

# Fellowships

The [Humanities Center's Kaltura channel](#) provided on-demand access to brief presentations by our four AY24 [Faculty Fellows](#) and two [Dissertation Fellows](#). Each cohort engaged with audiences and each other in live Q&A about their work during our “Meet the Scholars Coffee Hours” events. Bolstered by [HC faculty fellowship support](#), Mariaelena Huambachano successfully submitted her book manuscript on recovering ancestral foodways and Jenn Jackson completed a collection of essays on Black women’s intellectual and political contributions to liberation movements—both set for Fall 2024 publication. Florencia Lauria maximized her [graduate student fellowship](#) to complete and defend her dissertation and quickly secured a tenure-track faculty position.

## Humanities Center Faculty Fellows



Mariaelena Huambachano

**Mariaelena Huambachano** Assistant Professor, Native American and Indigenous Studies Faculty Fellow (A&S)

[Recovering our Ancestral Foodways: Indigenous Traditions as a Recipe for Living Well](#)



Jenn Jackson

**Jenn Jackson** Assistant Professor, Political Science - Faculty Fellow (Maxwell)

[Making a Revolution: The Radical Possibility of Black Space Making in the Digital Age](#)



Hille Paakkunainen

**Hille Paakkunainen** Associate Professor, Philosophy - Faculty Fellow (A&S)

[Natural Reasons Through Virtue](#)



Cristina Pardo Porto

**Cristina Pardo Porto** Assistant Professor, Languages, Literatures, & Linguistics - “Symposium” Faculty Fellow (A&S)

[Seeing through the Tropics. Photographic Interventions of Caribbean Natural Environments](#)

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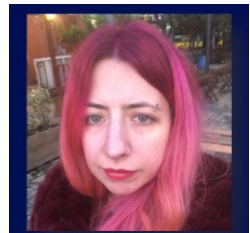
## Humanities Center Dissertation Fellows

**Çağla Çimendereli** - Ph.D. Candidate, Philosophy

[An Agency-Centered Approach to Linguistic Injustice](#)

**Florencia Lauria** - Ph.D. Candidate, English

[Turbulent Landscapes: Reading the Borders of Contemporary Latinx and Indigenous Literatures](#)



Çağla Çimendereli



Florencia Lauria

Explore further at the [Fellowships page](#) of our website!

# Public Humanities

Publicly-engaged teaching and research deepen community connections

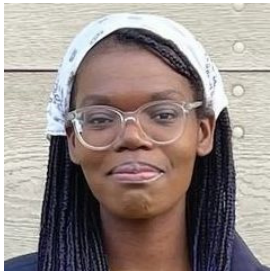
[Humanities New York](#) supported community-focused graduate student projects across the state through its [Public Humanities Grant](#) program, in partnership with the HC and Corridor. Two scholars from Syracuse University received this grant support:



**Chelsea Bouldin** (Ph.D. Student, Cultural Foundations of Education)

[“So be it; See to it: An Archiving Project”](#)

At its core, Bouldin’s work aims to democratize archival knowledge housed in relatively inaccessible, elitist institutions, particularly related to Black women whose histories have been disproportionately subject to mainstream erasure, with limited “windows and mirrors” to see themselves through literature.



**Caroline Imani Charles** (Ph.D. Student, English)

[“Family Pictures Syracuse”](#)

Charles’ background and interest in African American film history, Black visibility studies, and archives guide her pursuit of social justice by foregrounding the interaction of everyday material culture and oral history as a method of archival repair.

This year, the Humanities Center strengthened its alignment with Arts & Sciences’ **Engaged Humanities Network** (EHN), providing increased administrative support for EHN’s robust public programming, the coordination and execution of *Engaged Communities* networking lunches, *Engaged Courses* faculty meetings and more. The network hosted an immersive community showcase in May (*pictured at right*).



# Research Support

## Easing access to mentors and resources

Beyond our traditional fellowship opportunities for eligible faculty and dissertation students, the Humanities Center continued to respond to emerging career development needs in the humanities. In addition to directing more of our resources toward expert-led **workshops and webinars** on topics such as [Open Access publishing](#) and developing [productive and sustainable work habits](#), the Center is now into its third year of partnering with the College of Arts and Sciences to award **Book Manuscript Development** assistance to tenure-line junior and mid-career faculty in the Humanities. [Manuscript Book Development](#) awardees for 2023-2024 included Shira Schwartz (Religion); Margaret Innes (Art History); Ethan Madarieta (English); Verena Erlenbusch-Anderson\* (Philosophy); Gail Bulman (Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics); Ana Méndez-Oliver (Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics); and Tanisha Jackson (African American Studies).



**\*[The Book Manuscript award] was a fantastic experience that came at exactly the right stage in the writing process. I had three ideal readers whose comments have already helped me pull things together. They also gave me much-needed inspiration and energy after a completely exhausting semester left me feeling drained. Thank you so much for this opportunity!** -Verena Erlenbusch-Anderson

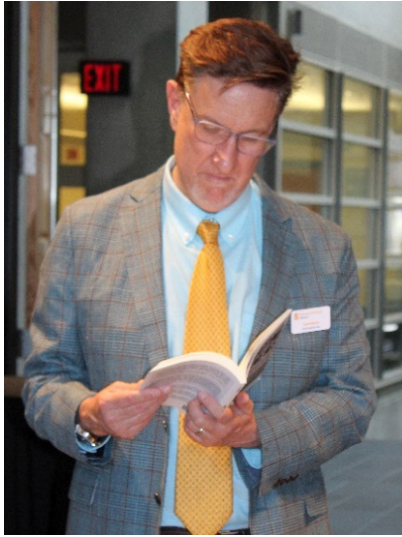
We received equally positive feedback when the CNY Humanities Corridor—partnering with the Humanities Center and Office of Research—hosted a rare regional site visit at Syracuse University from the **National Endowment for the Humanities** (NEH). On March 1<sup>st</sup>, [Claudia Kinkela](#), NEH senior program officer in the Division of Research, led a daylong workshop, offering valuable insight about developing competitive applications for agency funding. Kinkela also moderated a mock panel review and conducted numerous one-on-one consultations. This free workshop attracted well over 100 registrants from 22 regional organizations (including all 11 Corridor member institutions) as well as local non-profits such as the Cayuga Museum of History and Art, the Erie Canal Museum and New York Folklore.





# Books in the Humanities

## Humanities research stacks up



Our 9<sup>th</sup> annual celebration showcased [38 humanities-related © 2023 books](#) by 40 Syracuse University authors and editors, drawing an enthusiastic crowd to Eggers' Strasser Legacy Room on [May 2](#). Works ranged from scholarly monographs to creative writing, edited collections, and more. Our partners at [Syracuse University Libraries](#) expanded their [Research Guide](#) to include these latest



volumes. This popular event was also generously supported by the Syracuse University [Office of Research](#) and the [College of Arts and Sciences](#).

Any Syracuse University student, faculty, or staff member releasing a humanities-related book in the current calendar year is encouraged to tell us about it via the [book survey](#) posted at the [FORMS](#) page of our website.

# Books in the Humanities

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# Jeannette K. Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities

Māori philosopher Krushil Watene

*Peter Kraus Associate Professor-Philosophy / Faculty of Arts / Humanities - University of Auckland, New Zealand*

Krushil Watene's mini-residency provided key opportunities for public engagement around themes of "Indigenous Philosophy, Global Change, and Sustainable Futures." Jointly hosted by faculty members [Verena Erlenbusch-Anderson](#) (Philosophy) and [Mariaelena Huambachano](#) (Native American and Indigenous Studies / Religion), Watene's [campus conversations](#) addressed the intersections of diverse philosophical traditions and the role of local communities in fostering global change. [Kyle Whyte](#) (University of Michigan, seated-left)—renowned environmentalist, U.S. Science Envoy, and member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council—joined Watene (*third from left*), students, and faculty for a closing dialogue and reception. Explore the full slate of [Watene's public programming](#) at the [Distinguished Visiting Professors page](#) of our website.



# Central New York Humanities Corridor

## Inspiring humanities research across the region

Syracuse University Humanities Center is the lead endowment institution and administrative home for the CNY Humanities Corridor -- a [research consortium linking 11 universities and colleges](#). The Corridor's director and co-directors at Syracuse University, Cornell University, and the University of Rochester, respectively, draw from their distinct endowments to support the overall consortium, to offer several consortium-wide research support opportunities across the year, and to award funding to [Working Groups](#) seeking new ways to collaborate across institutions and disciplines. For instance, the Corridor's annual grant-style funding helps support:



- Convening working groups aimed at widening one's intellectual community, advancing academic research, teaching, professional development;
- Compensating expert facilitators for writing retreats or specialized workshops;
- Hosting book talks, lectures, symposia.

This spring, as many faculty clamored to re-energize research communities post-COVID, the Corridor awarded higher levels of support to a rich range of proposals (see year-to-year comparisons below). Collectively, more than 5,500 people engaged with this year's Working Group activities. Collaborators and participants came from more than 160 institutions and organizations across at least 30 states (including DC), 3 Canadian provinces, and 15 countries around the world.

### **Awards granted for AY23**

Total award funds: **\$222,135**

Activities supported: **134**

Active Groups: **58 (17 new)**

### **Awards granted for AY24**

**\$247,574**

**157**

**60 (15 new)**

## CNY Humanities Corridor (continued)

For a fourth year, faculty from Corridor institutions vied for highly-sought (but, alas, limited!) spots at our annual **Fall Writing Retreat** at the beautiful Minnowbrook Conference Center in Blue Mountain Lake, NY. A diverse pool of [scholars relished the time, space, professional coaching, and peer motivation](#) offered by this unique opportunity. First-generation, LGBTQ+, and faculty of color across all ranks—particularly those with heavy service loads—were especially encouraged to apply.

As noted earlier in this report, Corridor support and facilitation made several important professional development offerings freely available to faculty and graduate students at Corridor institutions. Through its “[HF4 Working Group](#)” administrative framework, Vivian May and Aimee Germain worked closely with Sarah Workman, SU’s Associate Director of Research Development in the Humanities, to orchestrate an **NEH site visit** in March. In December, we partnered with Workman and with Dylan Mohr at SU Libraries to demystify **Open Access book publishing** for humanities scholars.

Explore the many [areas of humanities research](#) and collaboration currently supported by Corridor awards.

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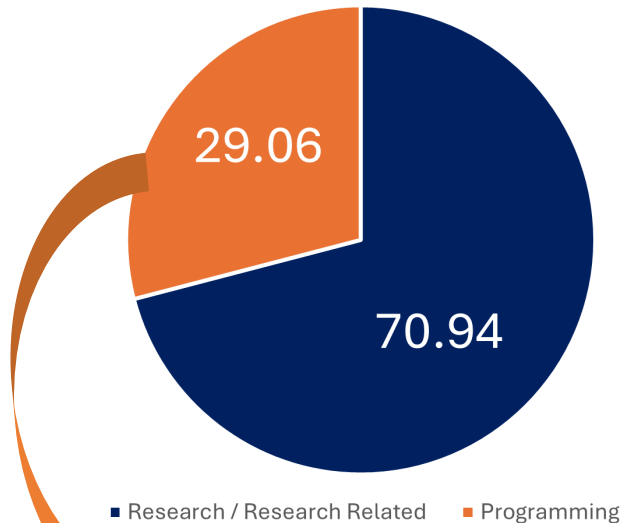
(pictured) Corridor director **Vivian May** joined numerous colleagues in offering thanks, congratulations, and bittersweet farewells to **Paul Fleming** as he concluded his 7-year appointment as the Taylor Family Director of the Society for the Humanities at Cornell University and, by association, his role as CNY Humanities Corridor co-director. Fleming passes Cornell’s Society for the Humanities leadership baton to successor **Durba Ghosh** for the coming academic year.



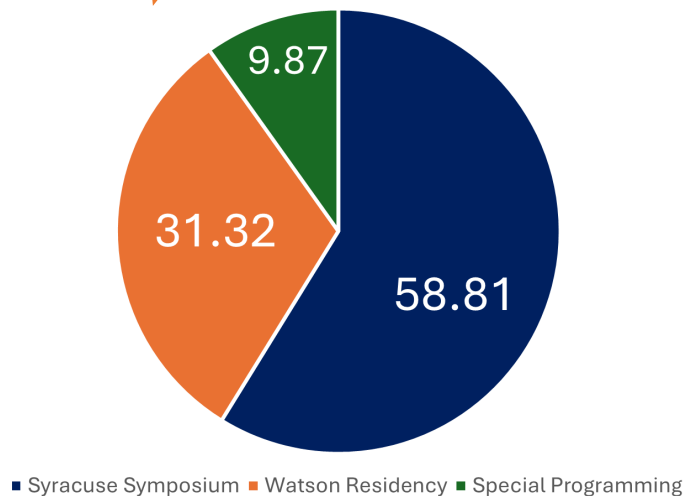
# Budget Overview

## Aligning resources with mission

HC Support Overview



Programming



Overall, we invested more than two-thirds of our budget in research-related activities and opportunities for humanities scholars, from fellowship support to book manuscript development awards to publishing and writing workshops.

We held our programming expenditures to similar standards, ensuring that our Syracuse Symposium public event series, our now-biennial Jeannette K. Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor mini-residency, and other special programs and sponsorships contributed to a thriving humanities research landscape. As emphasized throughout this report, these supported activities enriched curriculum, enhanced teaching, and encouraged inclusivity.

We invite you to explore CNY Humanities Corridor reporting to see how our stewardship of the consortium prioritizes humanities research support on a regional scale.

Noted at left in percentages, nearly **71%** of our budget went to **research and research related expenses** and overhead, with the remaining **29%** devoted to **programming**.

The bottom chart breaks out our programming expenses with nearly **59%** fueling **Syracuse Symposium** awards, **31%** sustaining this year's visiting **Watson Professor** mini residency, and about **10%** funding other **special programming** and co-sponsorships.

# Advisory Board

## Advancing a shared mission

The University's new [Strategic Plan](#) cites "Human Thriving" as one of four areas of distinctive excellence, noting that "... a commitment to human thriving is also a commitment to the cultural productions and artistic practices that give life meaning."

Enacting this principle, our diverse board helped build a thriving humanities community on campus that contributed meaningfully to the University's core values and mission. Board members were charged with innovating and disseminating ideas and opportunities to keep humanities at the forefront of campus life. They thoughtfully generated our annual Symposium theme and engaged with our faculty and graduate student fellows' research. Several volunteer committees reviewed applications to select our Faculty and Dissertation Student [Fellows](#) for the following year, as well as our Syracuse Symposium awards for next year's theme, "Community."

We offer our thanks to this year's board members: Kristen Barnes, Lori Brown, Kevin Browne, Catherine Cocks, Kathy Everly, Rachel Fox von Swearingen, Michael Goode, Gerry Greenberg, Eric Grode, Aneka Herre, Kate Holohan, Amy Kallander, Annie Laver, Courtney Mauldin, Brice Nordquist, Dana Olwan, Tere Paniagua, Srivi Ramasubramanian, Romita Ray, Chie Sakakibara, Danielle Smith, Scott Stevens, Miranda Traudt, James Watts, and Sarah Workman.

Link to individual member profiles via the [People page of our website](#).



# Website | Social Media

## Reaching across boundaries

The [Humanities Center website](#) evolved by the day, our public calendar briskly populating with HC-supported [activities](#) to attend, research [opportunities](#) to pursue, and [colleagues](#) to meet. Faculty and graduate students looked to our digital [Forms and Funding page](#) for HC fellowships and other supports. Our [Research Support section](#) provided key information on humanities resources available across campus, in the community, and nationally, while linking to specialized content from [Sarah Workman](#) - Associate Director, Research Development for Humanities.

Our [News](#) page collated posts and stories by a range of campus writers (and beyond) whenever HC-associated people and projects made headlines. A sampling of 2023-2024 stories:

[Indigenous Studies Researcher Advises the UN on Inequalities in Food Security and Nutrition](#)

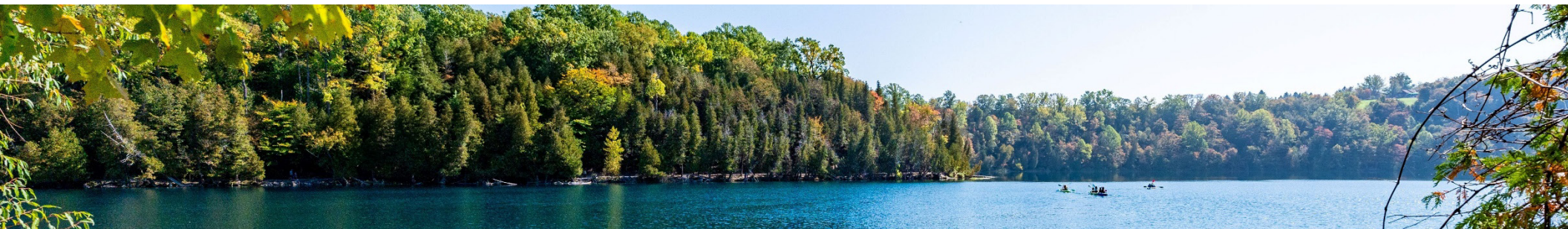
[Digging Into Nature](#)

[Exploring the Significance of 18th-Century Philosopher's Essay on Perpetual Peace in Today's World](#)

[Creating Identity and Building Community Through Writing](#)

[From Proposal to Publication: CNY Humanities Corridor Nurtures Faculty Scholarship](#)

A steady stream of *This Week at the Humanities Center* Monday morning e-blasts invited campus community members to take part in free curriculum-enhancing programming, workshops, info sessions, and opportunities to apply for support and recognition. Our brand-compliant social media feeds on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) magnified stories and reminders about application windows and successful humanities projects.



# Supported Partners Talk Back

The journey is better together!

The 'Coffee Hour' was a great opportunity to advertise my research.

-C.C.

We hosted a powerful event that brought a wide range of disciplines together through the lens of reproductive justice. -L.B.

I think the Center does a tremendous job! -A.L.

Students even brought family members to our full room poetry reading.

-A.K.

HC support spread word to audiences I did not have direct access to. -L.A.

The Center does great work and I deeply value its presence on campus.

-D.O.

The Humanities Center is a true asset to Syracuse University  
-F.D.

The variety of topics included in the Landscapes symposium was fantastic! Letting us interpret a theme through our own academic and professional lenses creates such a rich array of events. -T.P.

The German Program has been able to set up an author Zoom series—much needed voices and visibilities!

-M.E.

We're constantly told that veterans and military affairs is not treated as a "humanities" subject—but (by incorporating) dialogues, storytelling, and pedagogical elements, (our activities) became sites for creative humanities thinking and practice. -C.Z.



# Acknowledgements

The Humanities Center team for AY24:

**Vivian M. May**

*Director, Humanities Center and CNY Humanities Corridor; Professor, Women's and Gender Studies*

**Diane C. Drake**

*Assistant Director, Humanities Center*

**Aimee Germain**


*Program Manager, CNY Humanities Corridor*

**Miguel J. Rodriguez**

*Budget Associate, Humanities Center and CNY Humanities Corridor*

**Jacquelyn Ladnier**

*Administrative Specialist, Humanities Center*



## Image credits:

Stock images appeared in various *This Week at the Humanities Center* e-newsletters throughout the year.

Miscellaneous candid and headshots used courtesy of HC staff or event partners.

Testimonial quotes acquired via feedback surveys and correspondence with project partners and participants.

“Landscapes” Symposium artwork developed by Joanna Giansanti of GiansantiDesign