

The [Syracuse University Humanities Center](#) invites proposals for [Syracuse Symposium](#), our annual public events series that invites the community to freely engage with innovative work in the humanities by dynamic scholars, artists, filmmakers, authors, and performers.

In 2026-2027, the series will focus on “DREAMS”:

- Proposals should connect to the theme and illustrate the humanities’ wide relevance.
- Please carefully read this Call for Proposals and our “FAQs” below before you apply.
- Tip: draft your answers in a [Proposal Worksheet](#) (.docx) for copying-and-pasting to the online form.
- [Submit your proposal online](#) (Qualtrics) by noon on **Friday March 6, 2026**.

## DREAMS

Bridging the fantastical, physical, and the mystical, dreams are replete with symbolism, wisdom, and truth-telling. Dreams can manifest ideas, generate visions, reshape memory, draw on emotions, and offer glimpses of future selves. Dreams also take many shapes—they can be wildly creative in a positive sense as well as harrowing or apocalyptic and come in the form of nightmares.

As sites of visual splendor, or as manifestations of dread or premonition, dreams lie at the edge of consciousness—they are corporeal and metaphysical, understood as tied to the soul, the spirit world, and ancestors as much as to neuroscience, psychology, or cognition. Some see dreams as predictive, others find they offer guidance. Tapping into our longings as much as our fears, dreams can help repair old wounds and heal trauma, take us to places beyond reality, or, as “freedom dreams,” transform the shape of sociopolitical life.

By making the familiar strange, dreams prompt us to reflect on what has been lost or could have been, as much as what might be coming. As powerful rhetorical devices, dreams create room to express forbidden ideas, challenge status quo realities, and explore new desires and aspirations. Whether as a means of escape, prophesy, healing, or nostalgia, dreams can sustain, offering something to hold onto or hope for. Sparking individual and collective awakening, dreams often carry the aspirations of a community or generation forward. At the same time, dreams are frequently broken or destroyed.

From Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s “First Dream” ... to the ancient Chinese volume Duke of Zhou Interprets Dreams ... to Queen Maya’s dream foretelling Buddha’s birth... to Aztec dreams anticipating conquistadores ... to William Blake’s visions inspiring romantic poetry and art ... to films from The Wizard of Oz to Fantasia to Black Panther ... to Langston Hughes’ poems about dreams to hold onto and dreams deferred or Dr. Martin Luther King Junior’s “I Have a Dream” speech, dreams have been at the heart of miracles, premonitions, divination, creative endeavors, political movements, and social change.

For Syracuse Symposium 2026-2027, we invite proposals that draw from the humanities, broadly conceived, to engage with the many different valences and possibilities offered by “DREAMS.”

**Please read on for helpful FAQs to help you craft a compelling, competitive proposal!**

## Syracuse Symposium Application FAQs

Syracuse Symposium applications are reviewed by committee, with applicants notified of their status in April. If your proposal is accepted, a Commitment Letter will outline important next-steps, including key deadlines. Review all below and contact [humcenter@syr.edu](mailto:humcenter@syr.edu) if you have further questions.

**About the Proposers:** The proposal form will ask you to provide names and contact info for each collaborator who will execute the proposed event(s). Submissions are limited to one per person (as a lead organizer).

**About the Proposal:** The online form will ask you to describe your event, guest presenter(s), and how your vision supports the theme. Identify connections to humanities research and teaching. Discuss how the event illustrates the humanities' broad relevance. Indicate when the proposed event(s) could take place.

**Budget Worksheet:** The online application form includes a menu of potential expenses to consider.

- Tabulate each projected expense relevant to your proposal and tally your total budget estimate.
- A separate line will ask you to identify a funding amount requested from the Humanities Center.
- Symposium awards range from \$2,000-6,000, depending on the scale and need of your proposed event.
- Be prepared to solicit additional funds to cover all expenses: collective support also boosts engagement.
- Accessible format event planning is required: search [SU's Answers page](#) for updated resources. All public Syracuse Symposium events must include CART (*live event captioning*) or ASL (*American Sign Language*) as accommodations. [Note: Zoom's automatic captions are *not* ADA compliant.]
  - CART is more inclusive, but ASL can be an appropriate option in certain settings.
  - For a smaller activity -- where it is possible to communicate with registered participants in advance -- you can arrange accommodations upon request, by a published RSVP date.
  - CART costs vary by duration, format (in-person vs. remote), and venue. Local technical support ([LEMP](#) or a 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor, as applicable) is also required to make CART connections, at an average of \$60/hour. An average 2-hour in-person event can range from \$350 (in a CART-ready room) to \$780 (un-equipped room). CART transcription for a fully-remote event (i.e., Zoom, eliminating the need for local labor) runs about \$135/hour. (Vendor rates subject to change.)

**Q: Who can apply** for Syracuse Symposium funding awards?

**A:** Any faculty or staff from a University department or program wishing to meaningfully engage with the theme and demonstrate the broad relevance of the humanities is welcome to apply. Community organizations with strong ties to SU may also apply, specifically detailing their campus connections. [Note that we do not support events that require ticket purchase or fees to participate.] Proposed activities, even if rooted in specific curriculum, should be open to anyone interested, even if on a limited basis.

**Q: Should my desired guest presenter(s) be confirmed before I submit?**

**A:** At minimum, having initiated some early correspondence with your desired speaker helps you gauge availability, form an accurate budget, and submit a more persuasive proposal.

**Q: When can Symposium events take place?**

**A:** Syracuse Symposium events can occur in Fall or Spring semesters. In general, events that coincide with class blocks and business hours tend to draw best attendance. We aim to avoid overlap with large campus-wide events (e.g., Orange Central, Family Weekend), major holidays and religious observances, seasonal breaks, and the Center's pre-existing commitments. Proposals that have some scheduling flexibility allow us to fund more potential partners and create balance across the series.