

The [Syracuse University Humanities Center](#) invites proposals for [Syracuse Symposium](#), our annual public events series that engages wider publics with innovative work in the humanities by renowned scholars, artists, filmmakers, authors, and performers.

**In 2021-2022, the series will focus on CONVENTIONS:**

- Proposals should connect to the theme and illustrate the humanities' wide relevance.
- Submit applications, via online [form](#), by noon on Friday March 5, 2021.
- Due to ongoing uncertainties tied to COVID, we strongly encourage proposals for remote-format events.
- Questions? Reference the "FAQs" following the CFP below.

### CONVENTIONS

Conventions are as much about world-making as world-breaking. Treaties, laws, compacts, promises, agreements, and rules may be followed, modified, challenged, or broken, just as traditions, customs, tenets, habits, and expectations—whether philosophical, artistic, linguistic, musical, legal, religious, political, or personal—may be defied, adhered to, or transformed. Depending on context, and one's place in history, conventions can refer to sanctioned but also unsanctioned ideas/actions: the concept shines a light on consensus as much as discord. Groups convene to organize against (or shore up) the status quo, and to challenge (or secure) authority.

Whether we approach conventions as norms and expectations—or as rituals, gatherings, and assemblies—they are particular to a time, place, circumstance, people, and culture and are shaped by power, institutional context, and social values. Conventions can be sites of ritual gathering, community-building, politicking, or forging solidarity to engage in protest (e.g., for civil rights and social change), but they can, equally, be gatherings where people assemble to reinforce orthodoxy, enact regulation and social control, or seek to enforce the status quo.

- *How are conventions differently imagined, cross-culturally and over time?*
- *How do creative communities--of thinkers, artists, musicians, and writers—collaborate to revolutionize ideas, bring change to our ways of thinking about each other, and shift our perceptions of the world? How have artistic and intellectual communities convened to conserve traditions or save key practices or worldviews from disappearing?*
- *How have conventions been used to justify genocide, slavery, settler colonialism, eugenics, extractive capitalism, and war? How have different communities come together to agitate and organize to combat these violent legacies?*
- *When is un-conventional thinking required? What circumstances or historical moments demand breaking away from consensus, or call for (in)civil action—historically, ethically, artistically, and/or personally?*
- *How might we make visible how cultural, ethical, artistic, or legal conventions which seem natural—and are widely accepted—are constructs that can be changed?*

## Application FAQs

Syracuse Symposium applications are reviewed by committee. Applicants will be notified of their status by early April. If your proposal is accepted, a Commitment Letter will outline important next steps, including key deadlines. We will invite you to a planning meeting to review key organizing and budget items. Contact [humcenter@syr.edu](mailto:humcenter@syr.edu) if you have additional questions, after reading below.

**About the Proposers:** Provide names + contact info for the collaborators who will execute the proposed event(s).

**About the Proposal:** Describe your event, your guest scholar/artist/performer/author/etc., and how your vision supports the theme. Underscore connections to humanities research and teaching. Discuss how the event illustrates the humanities' broad relevance. Identify when the event(s) could take place. *Due to COVID uncertainties, we encourage proposals for remote-format events/activities.*

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

- Tabulate each projected expense relevant to your proposal, and tally your total budget estimate.
- On a separate line, identify the funding amount requested from the Humanities Center.
- Be prepared to solicit other funds to cover expenses: collective support also boosts engagement.
- Accessible format event planning is required: visit the [Accessible SU website](#) for additional resources. All public Syracuse Symposium events must include CART (*live event captioning*) or ASL (*American Sign Language*) as accommodations.
  - ⇒ CART is generally more inclusive, but ASL can be the right option in certain settings.
  - ⇒ For a smaller activity -- where it's possible to communicate with registered participants in advance -- you can arrange accommodations on request.
  - ⇒ CART costs vary by duration, format (in-person vs. remote), and how tech-ready a space is. Labor/equipment costs rise if a venue doesn't have all necessary equipment. For in-person activities, on average, the cost of a 2-hour event ranges from \$350 (CART-ready room) to \$780 (un-equipped room). Remote-format (e.g., on Zoom) costs \$115/hour.

**Q: Who can apply for Syracuse Symposium funding awards?** All units at the University interested in meaningfully engaging with the theme, the humanities, and demonstrating their broad relevance are welcome to apply. Community organizations with strong ties to the humanities and to University programs, students, and faculty may also apply, providing specifics about campus collaborations.

**Q: Should my desired guest speaker(s) be confirmed before I submit?** Ideally, yes. At a minimum, conversations should be underway to have an accurate sense of budget needs and to submit a persuasive vision of your proposed activities.

**Q: When can Symposium events take place?** Syracuse Symposium events span Fall and Spring semesters. While some activities must naturally occur on weekends or in evenings, events that complement classes or occur at the end of a work day tend to have better attendance. We aim to avoid overlap with large campus-wide events (Orange Central, Family Weekend), major holidays, and pre-existing programs in the humanities. Proposals with some scheduling flexibility allow us to fund more potential partners and create balance across the series.