

Health, poetry and art headline 2026 Humanities Week at ASU

By Megan Neely, ASU News
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The sixth installment of Arizona State University's Humanities Week is set to take place Oct. 26–30 across all four campuses, with students, faculty and community members invited to engage in a variety of events — including book talks, panels and art displays — that showcase how the humanities enrich careers, lives and research.

The [Humanities Week Open House](#) will kick things off on Oct. 26 at Durham Hall on the Tempe campus. Throughout the week, students can visit interactive booths and learn more about how the humanities can lead to a fulfilling life, a more equitable world and a career to be passionate about.

Humanities Week will also make its debut on ASU's downtown Phoenix campus Oct. 27 with a [panel event](#) in collaboration with ASU Health, hosted by [Cora Fox](#), associate dean of health humanities in the [John Shufeldt School of Medicine and Medical Engineering](#) and associate professor of English.

"ASU Humanities makes clear every day what humanistic inquiry contributes to the advancement of our nation, sparking the collaboration across disciplines that leads to positive impacts on everything from technology and democracy to health care," said [Jeffrey Cohen](#), dean of humanities at [The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#). "This week vividly demonstrates how the humanities help us understand our world and improve the lives of others."

The week's signature event, the [2026 Marshall Distinguished Lecture: An Evening with Laura Tohe](#), will take place Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 7 p.m. in Armstrong Hall on the Tempe campus. This year's lecture, free to the public and funded with a gift from Jonathan and Maxine Marshall, will feature [the ASU professor emeritus](#), an award-winning poet and writer.

Tohe is Sleepy Rock People clan and born for the Bitter Water People clan. She has written numerous poetry books, including "No Parole Today," which won the Poetry of the Year Award from the Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers & Storytellers, "Tséyi, Deep in the Rock" and "Meeting the Spirit of Water." Tohe is the co-editor of "Sister Nations," an anthology of Native American women writing. Her oral history book, "Code Talker Stories," is a bilingual collection of interviews

with the remaining Navajo Code Talkers and their descendants. She is also part of the Arizona Humanities AZ Speaks program.

This past year, Tohe was named the [second-ever Arizona state poet laureate](#). Among her awards and recognitions, she served as the Navajo Nation poet laureate from 2015–2025 and the Academy of American Poetry guest editor for Poem-a-Day in November 2024, and has been honored with the 2025 Native Writers' Circle of the Americas Lifetime Achievement Award, the Academy of American Poets Fellowship Award 2020–2021, the 2019 American Indian Festival of Words Writers Award and the Dan Shilling Public Scholar Award from the Arizona Humanities.

Here's a look at some more of the signature events happening across ASU for Humanities Week 2026.

Monday, Oct. 26

[Democracy Lab LIVE: Democracy in Real Time](#): In this interactive event hosted by the Humanities Lab, guests will be invited into a series of short, engaging explorations of communication, persuasion, storytelling, ethical listening, rhetoric and civic dialogue. Part performance, part conversation and part shared experiment, the event offers a dynamic and accessible look at how democratic life takes shape between people.

[Onigiri Action 2026](#): Come make your own "onigiri" (Japanese rice balls) with the School of International Letters and Cultures, and snap some photos as you do. Then post them with the hashtag #OnigiriAction to help deliver school meals to children in need. This event is free and open to everyone.

[Na:to Niok? \(Art Talk\)](#): The Labriola National American Indian Data Center, in partnership with Arizona Humanities and ASU Humanities, invites you to attend a moderated mural talk with O'odham artists Thomas "Breeze" Marcus and Dwayne Manuel. The artists will discuss the creation and importance of the "River Walk" exhibit that surrounds the Labriola Center.

Tuesday, Oct. 27

[Poetry and Picnic](#): Bring a picnic lunch and join the Poetry from Many Worlds Initiative and the Bilingual Press | Editorial Bilingüe for a collaborative poetry- and place-making picnic. Participants will receive a vintage Bilingual Press | Editorial Bilingüe book of poetry and a pre-stamped postcard inviting them to reflect through words and images on how and where they have experienced poetry across the ASU campus.

[Health for Humans in the Digital Age](#): This brown bag lunch panel discussion and group activity will bring together faculty leaders in the humanities to explore how methods and modes of inquiry from the arts and humanities can drive health care innovations and promote practices that advance care for all.

Wednesday, Oct. 28

[ASU Public History Poster Show](#): The School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies invites you to engage one on one with our current students and recent graduates who have been making an impact in public history research. Students will showcase their projects by creating and presenting poster-sized visual representations of their findings, including the social and cultural significance of their work.

['American Trickster' Book Launch and Conversation](#): Ru Marshall and Daniel Saldaña París will discuss Marshall's recently released book "American Trickster: The Hidden Lives of Carlos Castaneda." It tells the story of the faux anthropologist from UCLA who, with his bestselling Don Juan books, pulled off the 20th century's greatest literary hoax, passing off a series of novels as works of ethnography. Saldaña and Marshall will discuss the boundary between fiction and nonfiction, and the potential consequences when it is breached.

Thursday, Oct. 29

[Incarceration, Disability and Resistance: Then and Now](#): In this talk, Ben-Moshe, author of "Decarcerating Disability," will explore lessons from the movements to abolish prisons, psychiatry and institutions for people with disabilities, including the deinstitutionalization movement, from the 1950s to the present. The talk will consider how these histories can inform movements in 2026.

[Sound as Connection: Listening Across Species and Deep Time](#): Beginning with human voices and music, David George Haskell explores the connections carried in sound, showing how our sonic creativity arises from deep evolutionary history and present-day ecology. How do our mammalian origins shape our voices? What can we learn from the first musical instruments on Earth?

Friday, Oct. 30

[So What Are You Going to Do With That?: Humanities Alumni Panel](#): Join a panel of ASU humanities alumni to hear their stories of where their humanities degrees took them, and how their studies have positively influenced their careers.

Humanities Week 2026

See the full list of events at <https://humanities.asu.edu/week>.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Tables set up at Durham Hall on ASU's Tempe campus for the Humanities Week Open House in 2025. Photo courtesy of The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Text image(s)



Laura Tohe