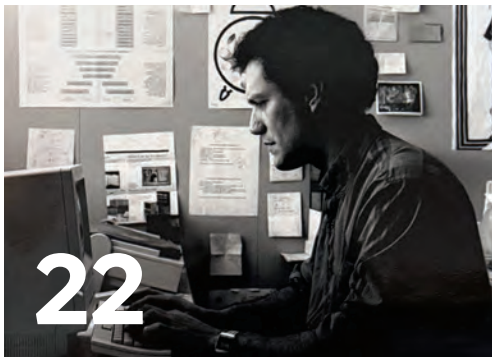
WINTER 2025-26

Arts & Sciences

For People and Planet

Syracuse University
College of Arts & Sciences

FEATURES



IN EVERY ISSUE

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Design
GiansantiDesign

ON THE COVER A woman in Cusco, Peru, harvesting potatoes. A&S work related to climate and food security policy (see pp. 3-9) is helping communities be more resilient.

Art and Photography
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"These grand challenges demand exactly what A&S does best: bringing together diverse disciplines to generate breakthrough solutions that help people and planet."

Dear Alumni and Friends,

In the course of working on the College of Arts and Sciences' (A&S) new five-year strategic plan, I've been thinking a lot about what makes us distinctive, such as our transformative research, nationally recognized Student Success program and broad range of academic offerings proudly grounded in the liberal arts. We are further distinguished by our long history of tackling global challenges with creativity and cross-disciplinary collaborations. Similarly, many alumni like you are making contributions in these areas through your careers or personal lives.

Inspired by this tradition, and building on our areas of excellence, we've launched an ambitious plan focused on four spheres where A&S can continue to make significant impact: Climate Change and the Environment; Health and Well-being; Culture, Community and Change; and Innovative Technologies. Of course, our vital work extends well beyond these four foci, but these grand challenges demand exactly what A&S does best: bringing together diverse disciplines to generate breakthrough solutions that help people and planet.

You can see this vision taking shape right now in this issue:

- **Climate Resilience Solutions**—Around the globe and in our labs, A&S researchers are working to understand, and respond to, the effects of changing temperatures on water, food and property.
- **Cultural Preservation and Food Sovereignty**—Faculty in our Center for Global Indigenous Cultures help shape environmental sustainability policy by bringing Indigenous knowledge to international organizations.
- **Community-Engaged Humanities**—Faculty and students are partnering with 50+ Syracuse organizations to address mass incarceration's effects, climate resilience and educational equity.
- **Brain and Mental Health Advances**—A&S researchers and scholars are finding new ways to help our most complex organ heal and thrive.

As we sharpen this strategic focus, and consider the ways AI is changing our world, we're also thoughtfully reviewing our academic portfolio. By ensuring our programs align with where students and the world are heading, we'll be investing resources where they'll create the greatest impact, and students (our future alumni!) will be developing the critical thinking, ethical leadership and empathy that will make them irreplaceable.

Your success in the world reminds us daily why our work on the Hill matters. Scan the QR code below to learn more about our strategic plan—and stay engaged as we build this future together.

Sincerely,

Behzad Mortazavi

Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Scan this code with your phone camera or visit go.syr.edu/as/Vision2030.

The Long View

A&S research safeguards water, crops and communities.

Imagine a future where drinking water sources remain protected for generations, communities can predict and prepare for extreme weather and crops grow reliably season after season.

As the following examples show, that future is being shaped today, thanks to work happening in our labs, classrooms and in the communities we serve.

Skaneateles Lake is a blue sapphire in the heart of the Finger Lakes, its waters long prized as some of the purest in the nation and a crucial source of drinking water for the City of Syracuse. But beneath that surface, a threat is emerging.

Harmful algal blooms (HABs), once a rarity, are becoming more frequent and severe in the lake. Climate change is extending and intensifying warm seasons and spawning more extreme storm downpours. Nutrients, especially phosphorus, are being flushed from the lake's muddy bottom by storm-driven waves and currents, fueling HABs in warmer surface waters and producing toxins harmful to people, pets and wildlife.

Now, Professor Christopher Scholz and a team of researchers in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences (EES) are exploring the lakebed in unprecedented detail. Using a multibeam echo sounder system, they are mapping the lake's depth and bottom type to determine which areas are bedrock, sand, gravel or nutrient-rich mud. The researchers also plan to identify the age and sources of muddy sediments.

Christopher Scholz (right), professor in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences (EES), with the research team for the Skaneateles Lake mapping project, including (from left) Jack Arnstein '26, EES research analyst Douglas Wood G'13 and EES doctoral student Nick Brennan.

The sonar system, an R2Sonic 2026V capable of scanning a swath of up to 1,024 beams, is mounted on the Dr. Robert Werner Research and Education Boat, provided by the Skaneateles Lake Association for the survey.

"With a digital terrain model of the lake bottom as well as acoustic backscatter information, we can better understand the movement of nutrients, target our monitoring efforts and develop strategies to reduce the frequency and intensity of blooms," which would help keep the lake healthier, says Scholz.

The data could also help inform critical infrastructure decisions from planning possible extensions of Syracuse's water pipeline to guiding maintenance strategies for marinas, docks and lakeside facilities. The comprehensive mapping ensures that such projects are based on accurate knowledge of the lake bed's shape and composition.

"With warming temperatures and increasing frequency of big rainfall events, we're going to be dealing with this problem for a long time, so we need to be patient and persistent," says Scholz.

Predicting Extremes

This summer's flash floods across the East Coast are another example of the region's increasingly destructive rainstorms. Now, Tripti Bhattacharya is digging into history to understand how further weather extremes could accompany the next decades of climate change. Heavy rainfall can damage communities, industries, infrastructure and ecosystems. Agencies from the Department of Defense to local resource managers need reliable models for planning.

Bhattacharya, Thonis Family Professor in EES, is leading a National Science Foundation-funded project to reconstruct rainfall and regional climate since the last Ice Age. The scale of downpours today may be unusual in human memory but not in deeper history. By drawing lessons from the past, Bhattacharya hopes to offer a clearer picture of future storms through more accurate models.

"We want to identify the climate models that are going to help us predict rates of rainfall, temperature and ecosystem change in the future, with the added benefit of helping us understand how we might adapt on the East Coast," says Bhattacharya.

While extreme rainfall threatens communities from above, rising seas pose risks from below to coastal communities. Some scenarios predict increases of up to 4 feet by 2100, threatening infrastructure, ecosystems and human lives through chronic flooding and land loss. Among the most significant drivers of this phenomenon is the melting of Earth's ice sheets, making it critically important to understand and accurately predict how these massive ice bodies will respond to a warming climate.

This is the focus of a new project led by EES professor Jessica Mejia funded by the National Science Foundation. "This work is a vital step toward building climate resilience," says Mejia. "By understanding how meltwater affects ice motion, we can improve models and inform policy decisions that protect vulnerable communities."

"By understanding how meltwater affects ice motion, we can improve models and inform policy decisions that protect vulnerable communities."

Jessica Mejia

A&S Professor Jessica Mejia will travel to the Paakitsoq Region of the Greenland Ice Sheet to investigate how glacial water systems connect and evolve throughout the summer melt season.

Hacking Plant Thermometers

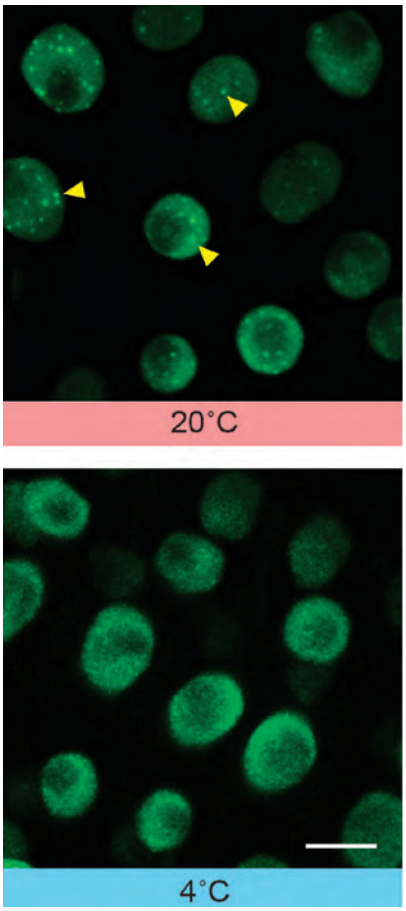
If you made a backyard ice rink in January of years past, you know that deep freezes are becoming less reliable. This new era of erratic winter temperatures can feel frigid one week, balmy the next. For many plants, these mixed signals bring trouble. They need deep winter cold to set their clock for spring flowering. Without this accurate clock, plants can flower too soon, and a subsequent frost can kill them. If plants wait too long to bloom, their pollinators may have already moved on to different territory. Temperature-driven flowering underpins everything from grain harvests to fruit tree yields. Mistime the cycle, and food webs could unravel.

Heather Meyer, assistant professor in the Department of Biology, is learning a new way to reprogram plants to ride out this climate chaos. With the model plant *Arabidopsis thaliana* (thale cress), she studies "molecular thermometers," which are proteins that sense temperature shifts. In autumn, these proteins cluster into tiny droplets that block flowering. During winter, the droplets dissolve, letting a new set of proteins prepare the plant to bloom in the spring.

Meyer found that she can adjust plant thermometers by swapping out a handful of amino acids. By tinkering with the protein sequence, researchers could fine-tune the amount of winter that plants require before flowering. The result would be a more precise and flexible plant engineering system.

Meyer describes the droplets as a "low-fidelity switch," like noise-canceling headphones for plants. If the sensor is too sensitive, she explains, the plant mistakes the end of a brief cold snap for winter's end. By pairing fast-acting droplets with slower, more reliable mechanisms, plants can ignore fleeting temperature blips and respond only to true seasonal changes.

By hacking the plants' own thermometers, Meyer is sketching a future where flowering—and the future food supply—can be resilient, reliable and on time.



Green fluorescent protein droplets inside plant cells respond to temperature changes over time. Under warm, pre-winter temperatures, droplets form to activate a gene that suppresses flowering. When winter temperatures arrive, the droplets dissolve, releasing this suppression and preparing the plant to flower in spring.

By tinkering with the protein sequence, researchers could fine-tune the amount of winter that plants require before flowering. The result would be a more precise and flexible plant engineering system.

Biology professor Heather Meyer has discovered a method to reprogram plants, such as the thale cress pictured here, by modifying their protein sequences—helping crops and ecosystems stay in sync, even as the climate shifts.

Traditional Knowledge, Today's Health

From the United Nations to the Arctic, A&S scholars are leading voices in global food security policy and cultural preservation efforts.

Applying Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable Food Systems

Advocacy and public policy efforts, which elevate traditional ancestral knowledge and are developed in collaboration with international peers, are an important complement to scientific fieldwork in the worldwide push for climate resilience. Mariaelena Huambachano—a Quechua scholar from Peru, associate professor of environmental humanities and faculty member of the Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) program and Center for Global Indigenous Cultures and Environmental Justice (CGIC) in A&S—knows this first-hand. She has spent years working closely with Indigenous communities. Their ancestral foodways, she argues, could become living blueprints.

Huambachano recently published "Recovering Our Ancestral Foodways: Indigenous Traditions as a Recipe for Living Well" based on work with Māori of Aotearoa New Zealand and Quechua of Peru. It discusses the concept of Indigenous food sovereignty (IFS), which she defines as the right of Indigenous peoples to control their traditional food systems, land and cultural practices, ensuring self-determination and ecological sustainability. IFS, she says, is needed as climate change reshapes the planet and deepens the threat to the livelihoods of Indigenous peoples.

"Indigenous food sovereignty goes beyond just ensuring everyone has food," says Huambachano. "It means everyone has access to healthy and culturally meaningful food, foods that are grown according to the rhythms of nature."

Huambachano plays a key role in global policy, serving in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Indigenous and Local Knowledge Task Force and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Science-Policy Interface, bringing both Indigenous and scientific knowledge to the same table. As coordinating lead author for the IPBES Second Global Assessment, she leads efforts to integrate Indigenous knowledge into biodiversity discussions, highlighting growing recognition of its value alongside Western science.

"We've seen an improvement in global organizations recognizing the value of Indigenous peoples' knowledge over the past seven or eight years, which has made this an exciting time," says Huambachano.

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"Indigenous food sovereignty…means everyone has access to healthy and culturally meaningful food, foods that are grown according to the rhythms of nature."

Mariaelena Huambachano

(Facing page) Mariaelena Huambachano with a group of Andean seed keepers of Choquecancha (Quechua Communities), from the highlands of Peru. (Left) Huambachano teaching students in Indigenous food cosmologies class.

"One of the key outcomes of our collaboration contributes to archival preservation on digital platforms."

Chie Sakakibara

Documenting Food Sovereignty for Climate Resilience

In Arctic Alaska, sea ice is eroding weeks early. In northern Japan, salmon runs dwindle as rivers warm. For Indigenous communities in both places, these shifts have disrupted food resources, livelihoods and traditions.

Chie Sakakibara, associate professor in the geography and the environment department at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, is leading these two communities in a rare collaboration. She is also a faculty member of both NAIS and CGIC.

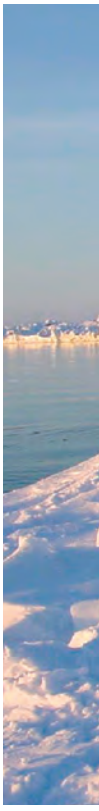
She has brought together the Iñupiat of Utqiaġvik in Alaska and the Ainu of Nibutani, Japan. The two communities of the northern Pacific Ocean share certain traits and histories. Both endured colonial restrictions on language, ceremony and land use. Both also absorbed ecological knowledge rooted in observation of the natural world. For the Iñupiat, that includes sea ice, bowhead whales and tundra. For the Ainu, bears, salmon, rivers and forests are crucial.

Now, the communities are combining traditional storytelling with innovative documentation methods to explore their own resilience.

In Alaska, Iñupiat hunters are identifying the history of thinning ice and eroding coastlines by digitally mapping sea ice trails and whaling camps. In Japan, Ainu researchers are studying early 20th-century photographs, re-taking images from the same vantage points to reveal environmental change.

This project grew from the wish of the two northern Indigenous communities to work together on exploring transnational Indigenous environmental justice.

"One of the key outcomes of our collaboration contributes to archival preservation on digital platforms," says Sakakibara, who is working with Syracuse University co-principal investigator Danika Medak-Saltzman and partners at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Exchange for Local Observations and Knowledge of the Arctic.



LOCAL IMPACT, CAREER READINESS

While A&S faculty tackle grand challenges around the globe, Syracuse University students are making a real difference right here in Syracuse, and building professional skills in the process.

THE ENGAGED HUMANITIES NETWORK (EHN), founded by Brice Nordquist, Dean's Professor of Community Engagement, connects students with local partners on projects that strengthen our community. Students progress through three levels of hands-on experience: taking community-engaged courses, joining collaborative research teams and leading independent projects. Along the way, they're helping launch farmer-owned markets, arts programs for teens, environmental storytelling initiatives and dozens of other projects addressing real community needs. They're learning by doing—and EHN is expanding rapidly.

(Left) Students demonstrate language use during EHN's second Community Showcase. (Right) Also at the showcase, Dionesa Krueziu '27 (left) explains her team's project, which reimagines an urban space.

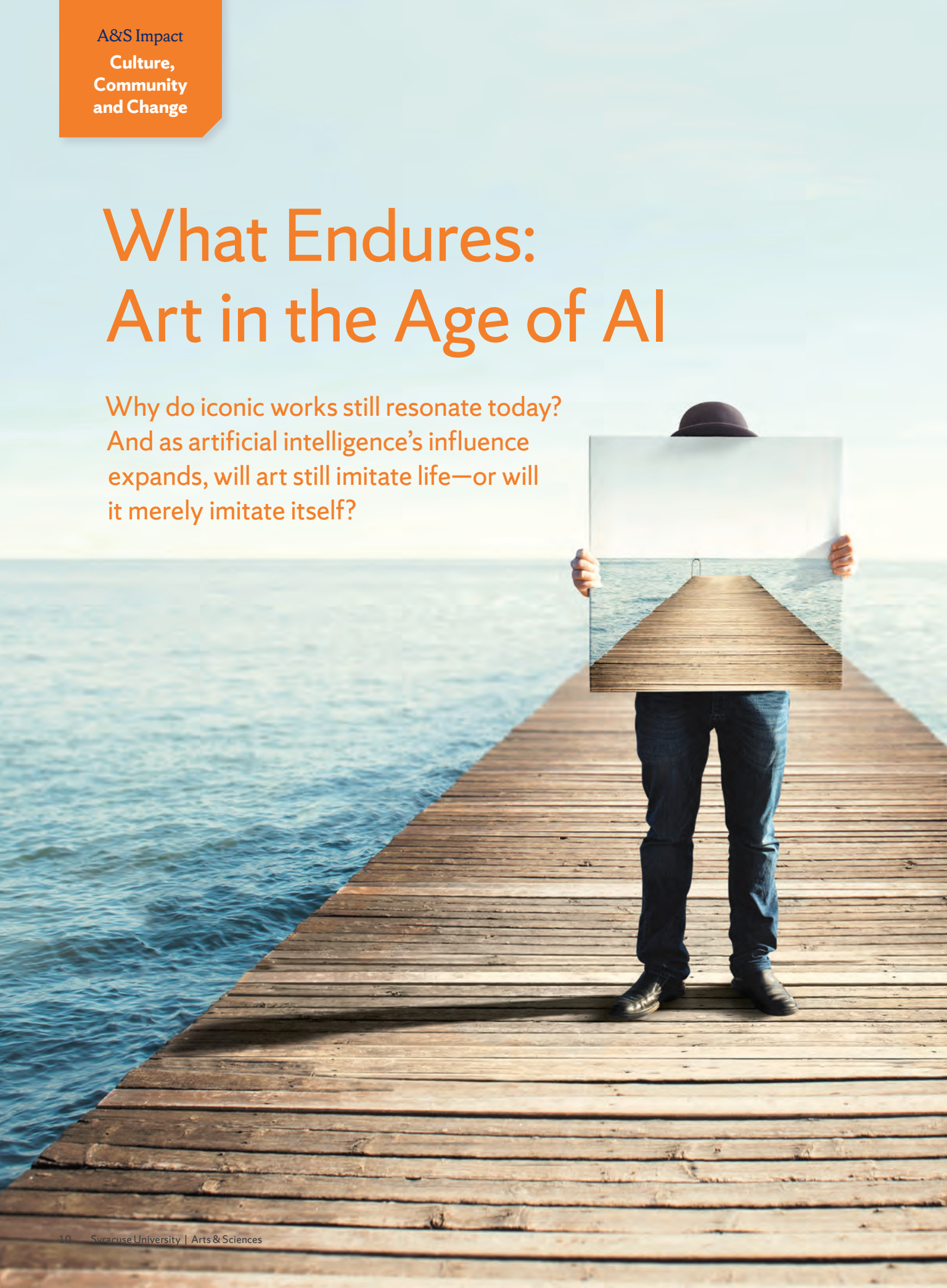
Traditional whaling on the sea ice in Utqiaġvik, Alaska.

(Above) Renowned Ainu weaver Yukiko Kaizawa (left) washes Manchurian elm bark in a Saru River tributary. The bark will become threads for everyday items. Here, Yukiko shows a youth how to carefully soften, split and wash its inner fibers, which will later be twisted into threads.

(Left) Narratio Fellows and mentors gather outside Point of Contact Gallery following a poetry reading. (Right) EES Professor Tao Wen and Aamna Khan '26 discuss a stream's path with an SU neighbor as part of the Engaged Communities program.

What Endures: Art in the Age of AI

Why do iconic works still resonate today? And as artificial intelligence's influence expands, will art still imitate life—or will it merely imitate itself?



We asked A&S faculty members why certain works have stood as cultural markers of their eras and what they predict for art, literature, film and music in an AI-driven world.

How do iconic artists and their art continue to remain relevant today and why? How does their work give us greater insight or appreciation for the times in which they lived?

Theo Cateforis (TC): Let's take Miles Davis. When people think of jazz, Davis is one of the first to come to mind, as he is relevant for his music, as well as for what he symbolizes. His multiple styles—bebop, cool jazz, fusion, rock and pop—have influenced musicians over the past 70-plus years as is evidenced by the strains of his recordings coursing through hip-hop, R&B, Latin and soul music today. Young people might not even recognize his influence in the music they listen to now, but they know they like it.

Davis was equally known for his iconic style that morphed from the elegant suits and shades of the 1950s to more colorful ensembles of the counterculture and Black Power movements of the 1960s. Davis's career unfolded during the Civil Rights Movement, which helps us understand how his celebrity within the genre was a form of resistance that pushed boundaries, promoted equality and asserted Black identity.

Will Scheibel (WS): Marilyn Monroe only lived until age 36, and people are fascinated with celebrities who died young—like James Dean, Janis Joplin and Kurt Cobain. Their ageless images continue to circulate, and they remain forever young in our minds. Their talent is often overshadowed by the tragic conditions of their stardom, the what might-have-been factor and the sometimes mysterious circumstances surrounding their deaths. As what would have been Monroe's 100th birthday approaches next year, I think her status as an icon has to do with her mystique, which continues to intrigue people.

Susan Edmunds (SE): An excellent example in literature can be seen in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, a reflection of post-World War I America. Protagonist Jay Gatsby is a hopelessly fraudulent social climber who has a capacity for belief that most begin to lose by age 7. *The Great Gatsby* reflects a conversation about American innocence that was rooted in the idea that colonial settlers were able to create societies free of European corruption and pass on a legacy of untainted optimism to future generations. However, ideas about American innocence have never been easy to reconcile with the extraordinary violence that went into the actual making of U.S. society.

The Great Gatsby remains relevant today, as it has evolved in American culture through its portrayal in four film adaptations and two Broadway plays, all of which reflect an ongoing fascination with the glamour of the Roaring '20s. Why? Because for the country's white, upper-class elite, this was a period of unprecedented wealth and conspicuous consumption. *The Great Gatsby* mythologizes our status as an imperial nation and simultaneously indulges and undercuts fantasies about our national character that continue to circulate, while subtly touching upon the false hope of the American dream, racial and ethnic strife and the inability to recapture the past.

Romita Ray (RR): Another example is the Impressionist movement, which dates back more than 150 years, yet still remains a highly popular genre. The works of Claude Monet and his contemporaries were considered revolutionary as they

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OUR EXPERTS

Theo Cateforis
Associate Professor, Department of Art and Music Histories, whose interests lie in popular music, American music and film music.

Susan Edmunds
Professor, Department of English, whose focus is U.S. modernism and 20th century U.S. fiction.

Romita Ray
Associate Professor and director of undergraduate studies in art history, specializing in the art and architecture of the British Empire in India.

Will Scheibel
Professor and chair, Department of English, who studies U.S. film history and Classical Hollywood.

"But we need to remember that AI is a human creation at its core, so when we speak of the impact of AI on creativity, we are referring to how it is changing the very scope of the human imagination and our ability to generate original ideas."

Romita Ray

focused on capturing brief moments of the everyday flow of life through radical approaches to light, color and loose brushstrokes—quite a departure from the carefully painted canvases of previous eras.

Monet's *Impression, Sunrise* (1872), for example, is considered an elegy to a revitalized France following the Franco-Prussian War with its depiction of a French port in the light of the dawn with boats floating against the backdrop of growing industrialization. The work established Impressionism as a series of exhibitions and a new art movement but was also criticized for being unfinished or even haphazard. Many artists were diminished for their innovative techniques, which makes us appreciate Monet and other Impressionist painters all the more for their courageous stance and creative spirit in the conservative art world of Paris that could unravel an artist's career.

Do you think that these works and their creators would be relevant if debuted today?

WS: During the height of her popularity, Monroe was certainly underappreciated as an actor, often dismissed in misogynistic terms as a dumb blonde whose only value was in her sexual appeal. Recently, however, she has gotten more of the respect she deserves for her work within the oppressive Hollywood studio system of the Golden Age of Hollywood. If Monroe were working today, I think a contemporary audience informed by feminist politics might be more sympathetic to her than those of the 1950s, although she certainly had her admirers back then. Now, classic comedies like *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and *Some Like It Hot* showcase Monroe's almost naturalistic gifts as a comic performer who consciously parodied the dumb blonde she supposedly played. Audiences today pick up on this irony and nuance. And it blows my mind that anyone would walk away from *Don't Bother to Knock* or *The Misfits* without recognizing her dramatic prowess.

SE: I find that readers respond to classic novels like *The Great Gatsby* much as they would to a novel written today. The novel's anti-Semitism, racism and sexism are overt, and many contemporary readers struggle to reconcile their attraction to the wealth and glamour of Fitzgerald's story with their aversion to the social biases and injustices on display. The invitation to sort out the relationship between these two aspects of Jay Gatsby's world is what gives *The Great Gatsby* its ongoing relevance.

How do you predict that AI, which can in a sense create, will impact human creativity?

RR: AI is making artists and designers imagine new and exciting creative possibilities for their work. But we need to remember that AI is a human creation at its core, so when we speak of the impact of AI on creativity, we are referring to how it is changing the very scope of the human imagination and our ability to generate original ideas. If you go back to the Impressionists as an example, it's about just that—the power of human emotion that drove artists to visualize the world differently—to capture the messiness and spontaneous patterning of life. AI may give us all the answers, but it cannot feel and, despite what some might say, it never will in any way that can compare to the depth of human creativity.

WS: No matter how much media technologies change, I believe people are always going to be drawn to the human element of stardom. Theories of film stardom, for example, teach us that audiences identify with celebrities because they model ways of being in the world and appear to negotiate seemingly irreconcilable contradictions of our social lives. It's knowing that there's a real human being under the glamorous persona that makes them attractive, and that's something AI can't replicate.

TC: AI has already had an effect on music, but probably less so on jazz, which remains popular as a live medium that values soloing and improvisation. I doubt that AI will impede the flow of human musical innovators and celebrities, especially because fans continue to crave connection with humans whose emotions, feelings and biographical details are important components of their artistry. I predict AI will continue to generate music for media, advertising and streaming sites, with some becoming popular. But once music is revealed to be AI-generated, it will become more difficult to market or promote. For now, human artists still have the edge. How much of an advantage they will have in the future remains to be seen.

"For now, human artists still have the edge. How much of an advantage they will have in the future remains to be seen."

Theo Cateforis

ENDURING CLASSICS

These art, literature, music and film history icons all mark important centenaries in 2025-26.

THE GREAT GATSBY

(1925)

F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel set in the 1920s explores themes of wealth, class and the disillusionment of the American Dream through the story of millionaire Jay Gatsby's obsession with long-time love Daisy Buchanan.

CLAUDE MONET

(1840-1926)

A French painter and Impressionist pioneer, in his *Impression Sunrise* series (1872), Monet emphasized mood over realism, defining the Impressionist style with its representation of a changing world and global exchange in 19th century France.

MILES DAVIS

(1926-1991)

A legendary jazz trumpeter and bandleader, Davis reshaped music for over 40 years, breaking boundaries and paving the way for Black artists and new musical genres.

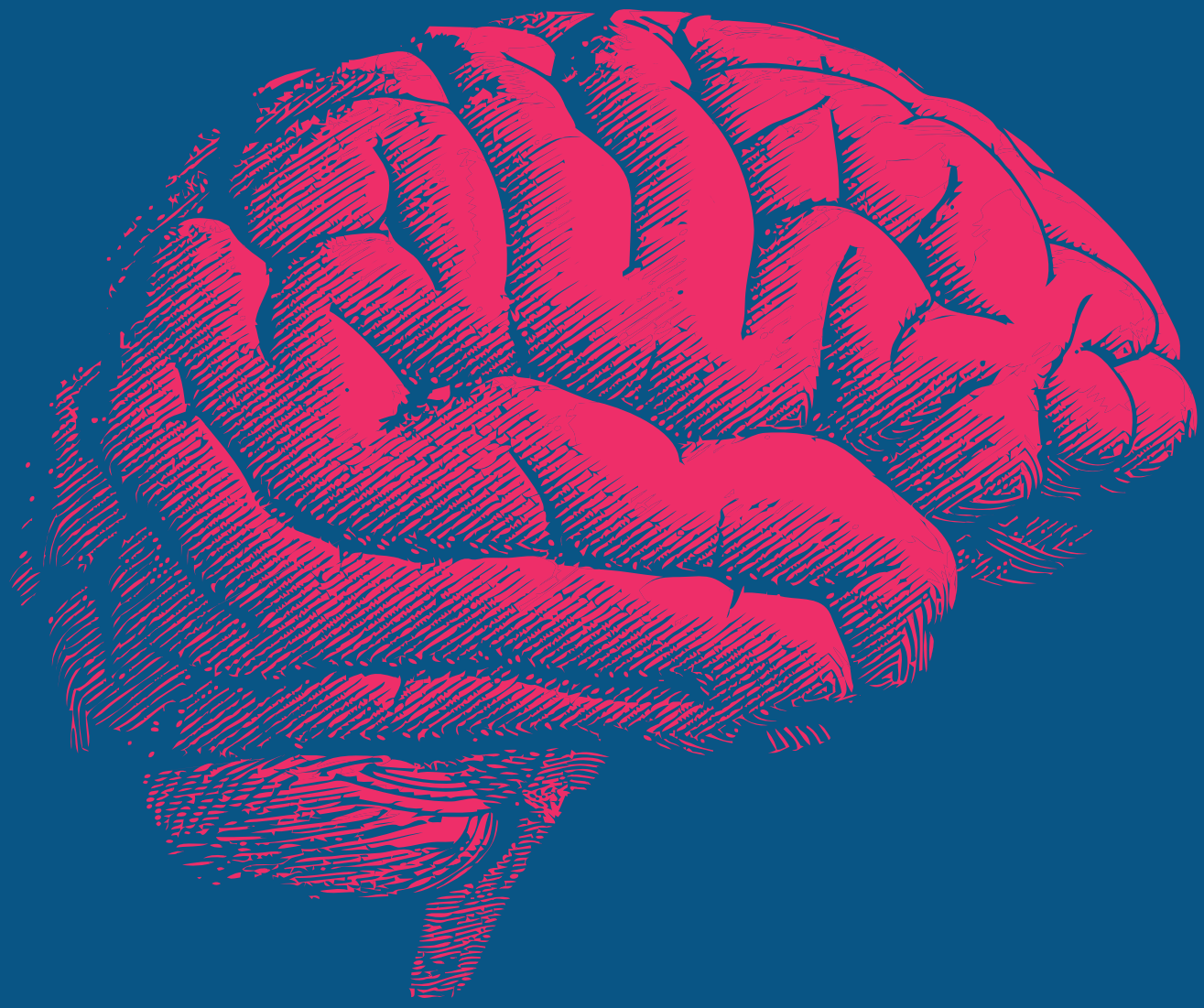
MARILYN MONROE

(1926-1962)

Born Norma Jeane Mortenson, Monroe became a 1950s-'60s icon, redefining beauty standards and symbolizing feminine empowerment.

Transforming Brain Health

From treating stroke to improving mental health, A&S researchers are finding ways to help us heal.



Your brain contains about 86 billion neurons with more possible connections than atoms in the universe. It is capable of adapting, healing and reorganizing itself throughout your life.

Today, that potential for healing is greater than ever. Across A&S, researchers are developing new possibilities for brain health and mental well-being, from stroke recovery to innovative mental health treatments. These discoveries promise to transform lives and answer important questions about this extraordinary organ.

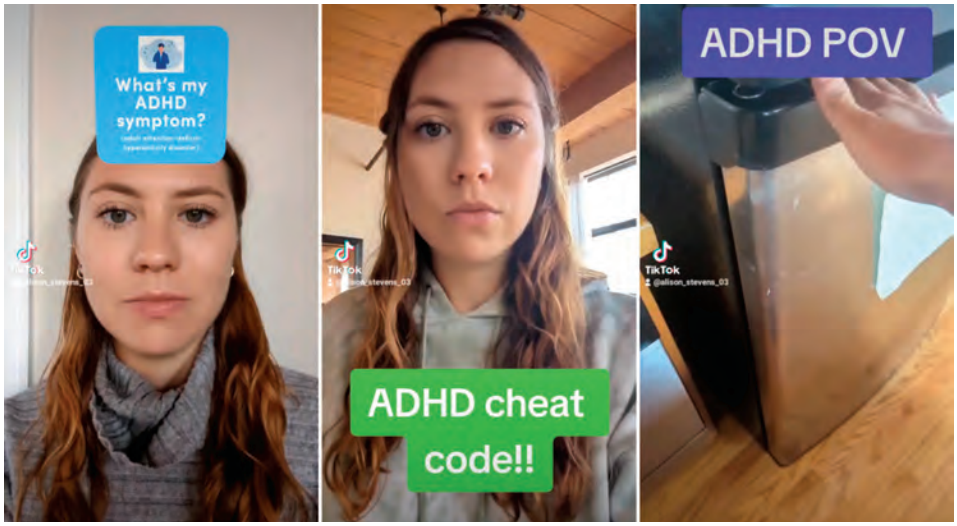
Your brain on social media

About a third of TikTok's users are college-age. And about 40% of Americans use the popular social media platform as a search engine for information such as news, how-tos and recipes. But the platform's viral nature makes it easy to spread misinformation, such as self-diagnosis of ADHD.

A study by researchers from the Department of Psychology found that exposure to ADHD misinformation on TikTok significantly reduced understanding of the disorder. Equally concerning, the researchers say, is that online narratives could reshape public perceptions of ADHD in ways that conflict with established scientific knowledge.

The ADHD TikTok study, for example, sprang from clinical experience by Ashley Schiros, a Ph.D. candidate in clinical psychology. She found many college students were seeking psychological assessments or therapy because they thought they had ADHD. That impression, she says, was often shaped by misinformation students found online.

Misinformation creates barriers to evidence-based treatment-seeking, she says, and people may develop an inaccurate understanding of the signs, symptoms and treatments for ADHD. The study also points to a broader concern about medical misinformation online.



For the study, Schiros created TikTok videos containing both accurate and inaccurate information about ADHD to investigate how such content influenced students' perceptions of the disorder and their confidence in understanding it.

BRAIN BUILDERS

Follow these tips for better brain health

Fact-check online health information with your own doctor.

Ask someone you trust for resources to address substance abuse disorder and other mental health conditions.

Keep a gratitude journal or create a scrapbook to lower stress and engender a sense of well-being and accomplishment.

Find aphasia-related resources at aphasialab.syr.edu/resources.

Be open to exploring and enjoying new practices, places or perspectives.

If you're pregnant, talk to your doctor about taking any supplements.

Your brain on alcohol

Nearly 28 million people in the US have an alcohol use disorder. Members of the IMPACT (Investigating Mechanisms for the Prevention of Alcohol Consequences over Time) Lab in the Department of Psychology are studying the development of drinking habits. The goal, says Michelle Zaso, assistant professor of psychology, is to understand why people drink alcohol, to reduce the harms associated with problem drinking.

"There are so many reasons people drink," Zaso says, noting that both heritable and environmental factors contribute. "It's incredibly complex."

Several IMPACT Lab projects look at how problem drinking emerges in the context of trauma and PTSD symptoms. Alcohol use disorder often occurs together with PTSD, where it can maintain or exacerbate PTSD symptoms.

In one of these projects, Zaso is looking to understand whether some individuals turn to alcohol to help process trauma. Traditionally, researchers have thought that people drink to avoid thinking about upsetting memories and emotions. However, Zaso and her team interviewed trauma-exposed drinkers, and "what we found was surprising. Some reported drinking not only to avoid but also to process their trauma." Zaso will research whether trauma-exposed frequent drinkers turn to alcohol regularly to process trauma in their daily lives. Findings may suggest the need for clinicians to adapt treatments.

Your creative brain

Creativity plays a role in both mental and physical health. Studies have shown that Black women receive mental health services at less than half the rate that white women do. Tanisha Jackson, assistant professor of African American Studies and executive director of the Community Folk Art Center, is examining how contemporary Black women artists have found ways to use art to facilitate wellness for themselves and their peers. Her research on 11 artists and 11 art practitioners informed her book project, *Black Women's Art Ecosystems: Sites of Wellness and Self-Care*.

Her study "challenges and broadens existing concepts of Black women's wellness used by mental health care practitioners," says Jackson. "It extends public and philosophical debates on Black women's history, visual and community-based art, and health by demonstrating how Black women artists understand and activate a process of wellness through creativity."

A patient receiving transcranial direct current stimulation at the Aphasia Lab.

Your healing brain

A stroke typically occurs when a person's blood supply to the brain is blocked by a clot or tear in a blood vessel. It is the No. 1 cause of adult disability in the U.S., and 1 out of 5 Americans will suffer a stroke in their lifetime

Aphasia—a language disorder that impacts word finding, sentence formation and language comprehension—affects about a third of stroke survivors, according to Ellyn Riley, associate professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. Plus, up to 80% of stroke survivors experience post-stroke fatigue.

Researchers at the Syracuse University Aphasia Lab (with the University of Michigan Aphasia Program) are studying treatments for those conditions through

a new, innovative study combining brain stimulation with speech therapy.

Drawing from neurology, speech-language pathology and neurophysiology, the study will use non-invasive transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) to deliver low electrical current to specific regions of the brain, making them more easily activated. This stimulation will occur concurrently with traditional speech and language therapy.

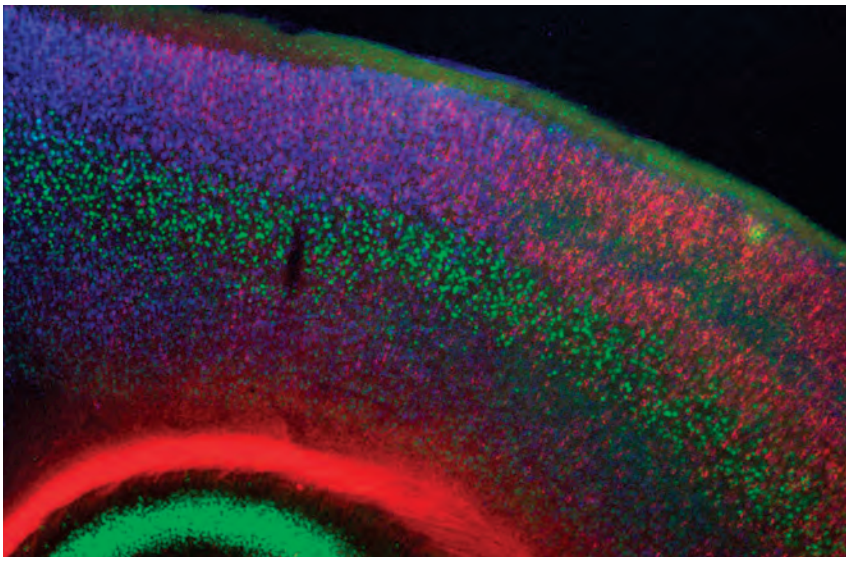
The research builds upon existing knowledge while venturing into uncharted territory. While tDCS has been studied for aphasia treatment, and post-stroke fatigue has been examined in relation to physical impairments, this study will pioneer using tDCS for treating fatigue in aphasia patients. While results are not yet available, Riley is hopeful that tDCS will lead to eventual healing of fatigue symptoms and improved language outcomes for stroke survivors.

Your mindful brain

While tDCS is a potential method of external, physical healing, one form of internal, mental healing is mindfulness meditation. About 18% of Americans use it to navigate our fast-paced, complex world and reduce stress and pain, and improve focus and memory.

A team of professors and students from the Department of Human Development and Family Science and the nutrition program in the Falk College of Sport is using mindfulness techniques to teach children to be open to healthy foods.

The Mindfully Growing curriculum aims to help young children develop an understanding of where food comes from and increase their acceptance of a variety of foods before they get set in their ways.



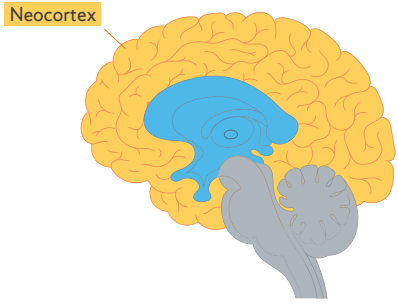
The brain's neocortex has many neuronal subtypes, some of which are highlighted in red, green and blue. Professor Jessica MacDonald is researching how maternal folic acid supplementation could help promote healthy neocortex development.

"The program is getting the students in touch with different ways to experience food," doctoral student Kristen Davis says. "They're seeing food in a different way, connecting with where it comes from and ways they can slow down and enjoy it."

Slowing down and enjoying the food teaches the children mindfulness. In addition to learning about nutrition, the program's mindfulness practices can foster greater empathy and communication skills, improve focus and attention, reduce stress, and enhance creativity and general well-being.

Your protected brain

A&S researchers are also working to prevent neurodevelopmental disorders from developing. Biology Professor Jessica MacDonald, for example, is investigating maternal folic acid's role in promoting healthy brain development. When the development of the neocortex, or thinking brain, is disrupted, it can result in neurodevelopmental disorders, including autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disability and schizophrenia.



The neocortex has many neuronal subtypes, some of which are highlighted in red, green and blue (above). Disruptions in the development of this organization can lead to neurodevelopmental disorders.

Previous research suggests that folic acid supplementation during the first trimester can significantly reduce the risk of neural tube closure defects, such as spina bifida, in children. MacDonald's team is exploring whether maternal folic acid can also rescue disrupted neocortical development in mice as it does for the neural tube closure defect.

"There are a growing number of studies indicating that maternal folic acid supplementation at later stages of pregnancy can also reduce the incidence of neurodevelopmental and neuropsychiatric disorders in children, including autism spectrum disorders and schizophrenia," she says. "Other studies have shown that too much folic acid, on the other hand, can be detrimental. Again, this likely depends on the genetics of the individual."

As A&S faculty members continue their vital work, they're not just advancing our knowledge of the brain and mental health—they're opening doors to healthier, fuller lives for countless individuals.

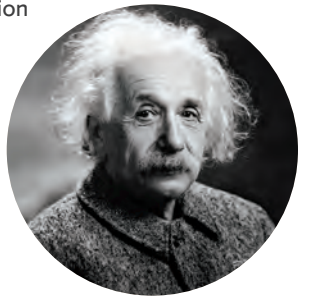
Artist's rendering of quantum waves.

Quantum: Information's Next Frontier

As home of the new Institute for Quantum and Information Science, A&S is at the forefront of a field that could transform pharmaceutical development, cybersecurity and our understanding of the universe.

With the world on the threshold of a technological revolution, the United Nations named 2025 the Year of Quantum. Indeed, quantum information science holds the promise of powerful new ways of computing and data analysis not possible with traditional computers.

From Einstein to Algorithms



The origins of quantum information science (QIS) trace back to the early 20th century, when Albert Einstein used quantum ideas to explain how light behaves like particles. His work on the photoelectric effect proposed that light consists of particles called photons, each carrying a specific amount of energy. This groundbreaking idea introduced the concept of quantization—that energy comes in discrete packets—which became a cornerstone of quantum mechanics.

Over the following decades, quantum mechanics evolved into a powerful theory describing the behavior of matter and energy at the smallest scales. In the late 20th century, researchers began to realize that the strange properties of quantum systems such as superposition and entanglement could be harnessed not just to understand nature, but to process and transmit information in fundamentally new ways. The field gained significant momentum in the 1990s when IBM's Peter Shor demonstrated that quantum computers could factor prime numbers exponentially faster than classical

machines, a profound breakthrough with major implications for encryption and cybersecurity.

According to Simon Catterall, professor and associate chair of physics in A&S, these early discoveries laid the foundation for a new interdisciplinary field known as quantum information science.

"Quantum information science seeks to combine quantum mechanics with information theory to describe the processing, analysis and transmission of information," he says. "It has both experimental components—learning how to store and manipulate information in physical quantum systems—and theoretical ones, such as using quantum computers to simulate quantum systems or understand the physics of black holes and gravity."

Overcoming Fragility

One of the most significant challenges in QIS has been error correction. Quantum systems are incredibly delicate, and even slight interactions with their environment can disrupt their behavior. Alexander Maloney, the Kathy and Stan Walters Endowed Professor of Quantum Science and director of the Institute for Quantum and Information Science in A&S, highlights how recent experimental progress is helping overcome this challenge.

"Scientists have significantly reduced error rates across a variety of quantum platforms," he says. "Superconducting devices are among the most widely discussed, but we're also seeing impressively low error rates in other systems that are crucial for building reliable, scalable quantum computers."

These developments have elevated QIS into a field of urgent societal relevance. "This series of breakthroughs has turned the study of quantum computers from a pie-in-the-sky dream a few decades ago into a field of research of crucial scientific and societal importance," Maloney adds.

Looking ahead, both Maloney and Catterall envision a future when quantum computers are specialized tools for solving problems that classical computers cannot. "I think it is very likely that by 2050 we will have controlled systems that can be used to exploit the full computational power of quantum mechanics," says Maloney. "But because they are complex, delicate systems, you probably won't have a quantum computer in your laptop."

Catterall agrees, noting that quantum computers will likely be used to tackle problems in physics, chemistry and biology that are currently beyond reach. "Fields like high-temperature superconductors, the structure of neutron stars, maybe even our understanding of quantum gravity," he says. "They may also play a role in drug design."

Leading the Next Wave

One area where quantum computing is expected to make a major impact is cryptography—the science of protecting information, such as the messages you send online. As quantum computers become more powerful, they could break many of today's encryption methods.

As the world races toward this quantum future, Syracuse University is positioning itself as a leader. "We are currently building a strong quantum group at Syracuse, which includes both experimental and theoretical components," says Maloney. "Experimentally, we will have several researchers working on various aspects of superconducting device physics, with important applications to quantum information processing as well as fundamental science."

The home of Institute for Quantum and Information Science will be located in the Physics Building.

"One of the most exciting ideas we are working on is the core fundamental question of how we can understand physical systems—from quantum materials to black holes—in terms of their ability to process and encode information."

Alexander Maloney

On the theoretical side, Syracuse is tackling some of the deepest questions in physics. "One of the most exciting ideas we are working on is the core fundamental question of how we can understand physical systems—from quantum materials to black holes—in terms of their ability to process and encode information," Maloney explains.

The Institute for Quantum and Information Science is central to this mission. Under Maloney's leadership, it is becoming a magnet for students, postdocs and collaborators eager to contribute to one of the most dynamic areas of science and engineering.

The institute entered an exciting new chapter in fall 2025, marked by the arrival of two additional faculty members and the creation of a dedicated space for cutting-edge research. Assistant Professors Scott Collier and Caleb Fink bring deep expertise in theoretical and experimental physics, respectively. Complementing these hires, the institute is finalizing a new research space slated for completion in spring 2026.

Learning by Doing

Think college is just lectures? Think again. Students in A&S are learning by staging full Shakespeare productions, creating visual film critiques and uncovering history in archives. These active approaches prepare students to create, collaborate and think critically in an increasingly complex world.

In professor of English Stephanie Shirilan's course Doing Shakespeare, students don't just read plays and write papers. They learn by producing a full theatrical performance—no drama major or theater experience required.

Rather than traditional text study alone, students explore how theatrical practice generates different questions and ways of thinking about the play. By engaging in hands-on and active learning, the experience also enhances students' problem-solving abilities, boosts their confidence and encourages their creativity—soft skills crucial for success after graduation.

"The idea of the course, simply, is that students learn Shakespeare by doing Shakespeare," says Shirilan. "In 2023, students performed a full theatrical production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Last year, students performed a highly produced staged reading of *Much Ado About Nothing* that leaned cheekily into the play's themes of staging as deception."

Students spend the first half of the semester engaged in deep textual study, critical and creative research, and conceptualizing a vision for the production. During the second half, the class goes into production mode, realizing this vision through intensive practice and long rehearsal hours. Both years' shows sold out before opening night. "In both years, the final performance was truly a triumph," recalls Shirilan. "I was consistently amazed by the insights and discoveries made through this process, a success that reflects the astonishing commitment, capability and courage of this team."

"The idea of the course, simply, is that students learn Shakespeare by doing Shakespeare."

Stephanie Shirilan

Making Visual Arguments

The rise of digital platforms like YouTube has transformed how people think about stories and film, making audiovisual critique more reachable and widely shared. This cultural shift toward audiovisual storytelling is influencing academia, where scholars are increasingly turning to media-based methods of analysis.

Videographic criticism is a growing scholarly practice that uses sound and moving images to explore and interpret works. Rather than relying solely on written analysis, videographic criticism allows scholars to work directly with the media itself by remixing scenes, layering audio and juxtaposing visuals to uncover new insights.

Meg Healy, a Ph.D. candidate in English, is using videographic criticism to complement her dissertation research on the cultural dominance of science fiction from 1950 to the present.

"I started experimenting with videographic criticism this past spring," Healy says. "I wanted to learn how to better convey arguments using sound and image."

That curiosity led her to Reframing the Argument, an internationally competitive workshop at the University of Notre Dame.

"Coming from an English literature background, my instinct is to lean into text and clearly explain my choices and analysis in writing," Healy says. "This workshop encouraged me to use images and sounds in ways that express my arguments."

The Department of English is offering a class on videographic criticism in the 2026-27 school year.

Tracing Historical Networks

Undergraduate and graduate students from African American studies and information studies came together for a hands-on archival learning experience with LaVerne Gray, assistant professor in the School of Information Studies, in the course Black Information, Memory and Justice.

The class explores the Black experience from an informational perspective, examining information networks, history and memory. With the support of Syracuse University Libraries Special Collections Research Center, Gray and her students read correspondence, personal photographs, scrapbooks, newspapers, magazines and art and culture journals to re-create communities through the traces of lives lived.

The culmination was a digital project in which students applied archival and genealogical research skills learned throughout the semester. Working independently and in groups, students produced Google sites to tell narratives through artifacts, manuscripts and secondary source research. Their narratives provided insight into historical contexts from the mid-19th century through the 1990s with attention to a complex network of factors centered on individuals in relation to their community.

Students explored diverse topics including entrepreneurship, the life and impact of Bessie Frazier, Harriet Powell's escape from enslavement and the network of abolitionists in Syracuse, organizations such as the Pan-African Congress and the NAACP, Black servicemen during the Vietnam War, Pan-Africanism and cultural resistance, civil rights activists Harry T. and Harriette Moore, and publications central to the Black Arts during the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Power and Black Nationalism movements.

Through their work with primary sources, students highlighted the importance of archival collections to keep individuals' stories alive.

Otto, Meet Claude

Syracuse University is one of the first universities to provide campuswide AI access.

THANKS TO A NEW PARTNERSHIP with Anthropic, the artificial intelligence research and safety company, every student, faculty and staff member at Syracuse University has access to Claude for Education. With this collaboration, Syracuse becomes one of the first universities in the United States to deliver institution-wide access to Claude, underscoring its position as the most digitally connected campus in the nation.

"Generative AI is already reshaping how we think, work and learn," says Lois Agnew, vice chancellor, provost and chief academic officer. "By making Claude available to everyone at Syracuse, we are providing a safe, trusted, ethical and powerful platform that empowers students, faculty and staff to harness AI's potential."

The partnership provides features such as learning mode, which helps students work through problems rather than Claude simply providing answers. University data will remain secure and will not be used to train AI models.

In the College of Arts and Sciences, faculty are already integrating AI into their teaching, so that their students will be prepared to responsibly use this omnipresent digital tool. For example, in his course Computing Culture: Technology and the Humanities, instructor Patrick Williams explores how students can critically think about and use digital technology from a humanities perspective. Williams is also part of A&S's new AI Course (Re)Design Community of Practice, a cohort of eight faculty who meet weekly to share strategies for teaching courses that use or address artificial intelligence.

Gerry Greenberg in the Tolley Humanities Building's Sainsbury Library, wearing one of his signature bow ties. Greenberg was a key member of the team that reimagined the Tolley Building, transforming it from an administrative building for the University into the home of the Syracuse University Humanities Center. "I was proud of that participation," he says. "I felt it was important to create a dedicated space for A&S and for humanities as part of the liberal arts."

A Liberal Arts Leader

Gerald Greenberg has retired after 40 years at Syracuse University.

When looking back on a career, what stands out? Influence in the field, mentorship, a signature style? For Gerry Greenberg, senior associate dean and associate professor of Russian and linguistics in the College of Arts and Sciences, it's all of this and more.

After four decades at Syracuse University, Greenberg retired at the end of the Fall 2025 semester. His departure marks the end of an era defined by profound institutional knowledge, unwavering dedication to the liberal arts and a deep commitment to student and faculty success. Throughout his tenure, Greenberg has shaped generations of students, faculty and administrators, leaving a lasting legacy at Syracuse University.

From Miami to the Hill

Greenberg's journey to Syracuse began in Miami. The youngest of three boys, he was raised in a household where education was deeply valued. His mother, a teacher, became the family's primary provider after the passing of his father during Greenberg's childhood. "Education was always a very important thing in our household," Greenberg recalls.

Growing up in Miami, he also encountered Spanish-speaking Cuban refugees who had escaped the Cuban Revolution of the 1950s. This early exposure to linguistic diversity, combined with a growing interest in Russian—rooted in the language of his ancestors—sparked a lifelong passion for languages.

It wasn't until his college years at Bucknell University that he formally began studying the language, eventually declaring a double major in mathematics and Russian.

He would eventually end up in Central New York, where he earned a master's degree and Ph.D. in Slavic linguistics at Cornell University. After enduring a few grueling winters during his graduate studies, he applied for the handful of jobs that were available. "My wife Pat said, 'Gerry, I don't care where you get a job, as long as it's not in Syracuse.' And lo and behold, that was the only job I was offered."

Despite the snowy welcome, Syracuse proved to be the perfect fit. The University's strong Slavic presence, bolstered by its post-World War II role as the home of the Air Force language school, made it an ideal home for Greenberg's academic interests.

A Dedicated Researcher, Teacher and Mentor

From the moment he stepped onto campus in 1985, Greenberg's reputation as a scholar-teacher began to grow. Early publications and presentations quickly attracted attention to his scholarly work. Jim Lavine, professor of linguistics at Bucknell University and a longtime collaborator with Greenberg, recalls, "When I first encountered Gerry, he was among a small group of rising prominent linguists who applied contemporary theory to Slavic data."

Over the years, Greenberg and Lavine collaborated on multiple projects. Their friendship extended beyond academia, with personal memories like Greenberg's daughter Stacey babysitting Lavine's child and even accompanying the family to Moscow in 2006. Lavine fondly remembers sitting with Greenberg in a hard rain on Bucknell's quad during Stacey's graduation, a moment emblematic of their enduring bond.

"Gerry has been a friend and close colleague throughout the 25 years of my academic career," says Lavine. "It's been a genuine delight to have crossed paths on so many occasions, both professional and personal."

The enthusiasm and dedication Gerry applied to examining the way Russian and Slavic languages work also permeated his interactions with students. His mentorship, humor and genuine care left lasting impressions on those he taught and advised.

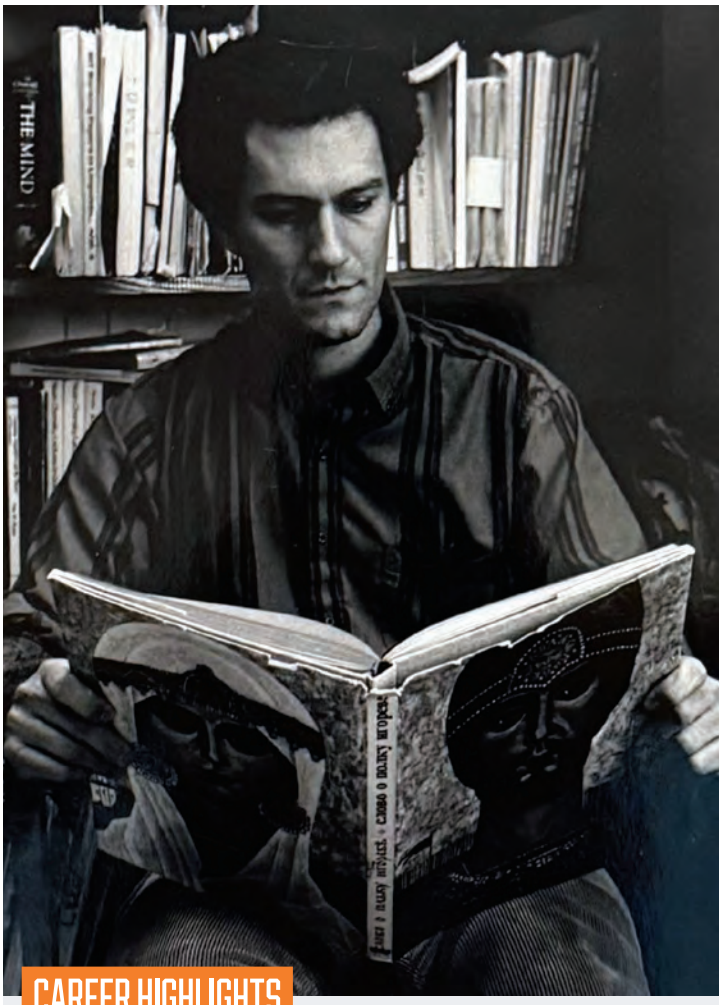
Jilly Lederman '91, who received degrees in Russian and magazine journalism at Syracuse, vividly remembers her first class with Greenberg. "It was 8 a.m. on the first day of my first semester, Intensive Russian 101," Lederman recalls. "Gerry was this tall, funny, quirky guy with a LOT of curly black hair who was a little intimidating at first. We joked that he looked like a Muppet, always waving his hands around."

Lederman hadn't planned to major in Russian, but Greenberg's teaching changed her path. "His classes were fast paced, which I loved," she says. "Combined with his sense of humor, it made for a really great experience. Later, he mentored me personally, even buying me a Russian linguistics workbook and giving me mini lessons. He took me to a linguistics conference at Cornell and introduced me to his mentors. That day changed my life."

She went on to earn a Ph.D. in Slavic linguistics and later taught Russian at the University of Virginia, Rochester Institute of Technology and Nazareth College, using the same textbook she had once studied in Greenberg's class. "I had come full circle. I just lacked the hairdo," says Lederman, who now teaches English at the BART (Berkshire Arts and Technology) Charter Public School in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, continuing her lifelong interest in language learning.

Stephen Barton '12 was another student who received valuable mentorship from Greenberg. Although he never took a class with him, due to Greenberg's growing administrative duties at the time, he still felt his impact.

"I met Gerry when I was deciding between Russian and German. He candidly told me to pick Russian; it fit my interests better. That advice led me to a Fulbright scholarship and a career in public service," says Barton, who is now a speechwriter and director of intergovernmental relations for Senate Democratic leader Charles E. Schumer.



CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Trusted Academic Leader: Served as A&S senior associate dean for academic affairs and chaired multiple departments, collaborating closely with several A&S deans and countless faculty and staff.

Scholar. Teacher. Mentor. Convocation Host Extraordinaire. Shaped the academic and professional journeys of generations of faculty and students, while also serving as a familiar and guiding presence at graduation celebrations.

Champion of the Liberal Arts: Advocated nationally for liberal arts education through essays in *The Washington Post* and an appearance on NPR's *Enrolled* podcast, emphasizing a curriculum steeped in creativity, critical thinking and cultural awareness. Also helped to establish the Syracuse University Humanities Center, the heart of the humanities and liberal arts at SU.

(Above) Greenberg in the late '80s.

Scan the QR code with your phone camera to further explore Greenberg's career journey or visit go.syr.edu/as/liberal-arts-leader.

A steadfast figure in the College's leadership for over two decades, Greenberg was a familiar and respected presence at Convocation and Commencement ceremonies, pictured at 2024 Undergraduate A&S | Maxwell Convocation.

Barton later served on the A&S Dean's Advisory Board, where he reconnected with Greenberg. "Even as an administrator who never formally taught me, his words of advice had a profound and positive impact on my life."

Fit to Lead

While his time at SU was marked by a passion for teaching and researching language and linguistics, it was his ability to lead and support units throughout A&S that would define much of his career.

From 1997 to 2003, Greenberg served as chair of the Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics. His service also stretched far beyond his home department, exemplifying his collaborative spirit and readiness to assist wherever needed. Over the years, he was also interim chair or director for many A&S departments and units including English, philosophy, religion, women's and gender studies, writing and rhetoric, African American studies, linguistic studies and the Syracuse University Humanities Center.

Greenberg (right) at a Coming Back Together event with, from left, Scott Ruff, former assistant professor in the School of Architecture, the late Micere Githae Mugo and Dean Emerita Cathryn R. Newton.

In 2003, he was appointed associate dean for humanities at A&S under then-Dean Cathryn R. Newton.

An integral member of the A&S dean's office for the past two decades, Greenberg served as a trusted advisor to Newton and subsequent deans George Langford, Karin Ruhlandt, Lois Agnew and Behzad Mortazavi. He helped each leader implement their vision and navigate the complexities of the University's largest, most academically diverse college.

"Working with Gerry has truly been a privilege," says Mortazavi, current dean of A&S. "He's one of those rare people who makes everything run smoother just by being involved. I'm incredibly grateful for his guidance and friendship, and I hope retirement brings him all the joy he's earned."

Champion of the Liberal Arts

Greenberg's passion for the liberal arts is perhaps his most enduring contribution to higher education in general. Promoting their value on national platforms, he published a trilogy of essays in *The Washington Post* and appeared on NPR's *Enrolled* podcast, where he articulated the value of a well-rounded education rooted in creativity, critical thinking and cultural awareness.

He notes that much of this work was shaped by his service on the Board of Directors for the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences, which he credits as pivotal to his understanding and appreciation of the liberal arts.

As Gerry Greenberg steps away from his decades-long career at Syracuse University, his words offer a fitting reflection on a career shaped by curiosity, service and a deep commitment to learning. "My life is a continual example of broadening horizons…At the heart of this is continuing to learn about new things and seeing things from different perspectives."

Arts & Sciences Celebrates

Get a glimpse of the smiles and excitement as we met our newest students and welcomed family and friends last semester.

SYRACUSE WELCOME

(Clockwise, from left) Students stream in from the bus stop on the first day of classes; Department chair Gregory Hoke (center) and professor Linda Ivany (right) greet a new Earth and environmental sciences student at the Experience A&S | Maxwell event.

FAMILY WEEKEND

(At left) Family and friends take a stroll through campus. (Above) Can't forget to snap a picture together with Otto!

Welcome, Falk Alumni!

New department complements A&S' academic offerings in health and well-being.

The College of Arts and Sciences welcomes a new department, the Department of Human Development and Family Science (HDFS), which brings together the marriage and family therapy, and human development and family science programs from Falk College. This integration strengthens A&S' commitment to research, clinical training and education in human development and family dynamics, helping to foster healthier, more resilient communities.

With the move, the College expands its long-standing commitment to solving global challenges around health and well-being. Today, with these programs from Falk College now part of A&S, students and faculty have even more avenues for collaboration and creativity around strengthening families, supporting mental health and building resilient communities.

HDFS focuses on the scientific study of social, physical, emotional and behavioral development. This interdisciplinary department, which draws from psychology, sociology and education, is a natural addition to other A&S departments and programs, including psychology, communication sciences and disorders, health humanities, LGBTQ studies, neuroscience, and women's and gender studies. Cross-program partnerships will expand student learning opportunities in health-adjacent fields, drive research innovation and significantly enhance the College's collective impact on individual and community well-being.

A&S Dean Behzad Mortazavi says, "I'm delighted to welcome the faculty, staff and students of HDFS to the College of Arts and Sciences. Expanding these human-centered academic offerings underscores our strong commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration that addresses pressing issues and contributes to the public good."

With the arrival of HDFS, A&S | Maxwell students now have access to a broader and deeper array of courses and research opportunities. Students gain an opportunity to work alongside HDFS faculty to explore how individuals and families grow and thrive, with a focus on relationships, cultural and societal influences, and public policy. This research spans topics such as child and adolescent development, aging, family dynamics, mindfulness and evidence-based interventions that promote well-being across communities.

SU began transferring students from Falk to A&S in July, with full matriculation at the start of the fall semester.

DID YOU KNOW?

THE NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS offered through HDFS are not the only new majors available at A&S this year.

The College has also launched a bachelor of arts in astronomy, offering students a broad, interdisciplinary foundation in the study of the universe. The program explores celestial phenomena such as stars, planets, galaxies and black holes through both theoretical and observational approaches.

Housed in the Department of Physics, research opportunities allow students to work alongside faculty on projects involving gravitational waves, stellar explosions and supermassive black holes.

Graduates are prepared for careers in research, education, data analysis and science communication, as well as for advanced study in astronomy, physics or related fields.

Meet the New Faculty

15 new professors joined A&S this fall.

Jason Boock
Associate Teaching Professor, Biology

Carmel Christy K J
Assistant Teaching Professor, Women's and Gender Studies

Scott Collier
Assistant Professor, Physics

Vanessa Evans
Assistant Professor, English

Caleb Fink
Assistant Professor, Physics

Clare Fitzgerald
Visiting Assistant Professor, Art and Music Histories

Collie Fulford
Associate Professor, Writing Studies, Rhetoric and Composition; Director, Center for Writing

Weijun Gui
Assistant Professor, Chemistry

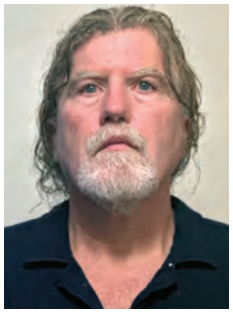
Yuki (Qiuxi) Huang
Research Assistant Professor, Psychology

Sarah Karalunas
Cobb-Jones Endowed Professor and Department Chair, Psychology

Justin Ko
Assistant Professor, Mathematics

Isiah Lavender III
University Professor, English

Charles Nudelman
Assistant Professor, Communication Sciences and Disorders



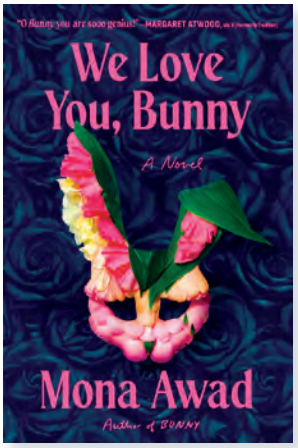
Steven Penn
Research Professor, Physics

Ruslan Podviianiuk
Research Assistant Professor, Physics

Scan the QR code with your phone camera for more information about these new faculty members or visit go.syr.edu/as/new-faculty.

A&S Bookshelf

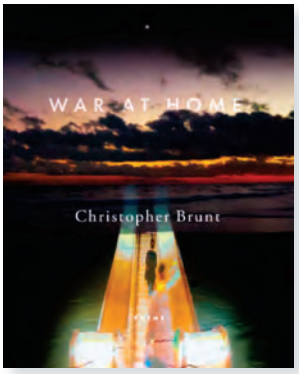
Need to round out your 2026 reading list? Explore this selection of recent works by creative writing faculty and alumni.



We Love You, Bunny
A Novel

Mona Awad
Esther M. Larsen Faculty Fellow in the Humanities and Assistant Professor of English

The highly anticipated follow-up to the viral sensation *Bunny*, a brilliantly written, laugh-out-loud funny, dark and delirious novel set in the Bunny-verse—a world that legendary writer Margaret Atwood declared "soooo genius."



War at Home
Poems

Chris Brunt
Assistant Teaching Professor of English

Profane, ecstatic, vulnerable and fluent in as many literary registers as there are angles in a mirrored room, Brunt's debut collection is autobiography written in myth.

Some Like It Hot
BFI Film Classics

Steven Cohan
Dean's Distinguished Professor Emeritus of English

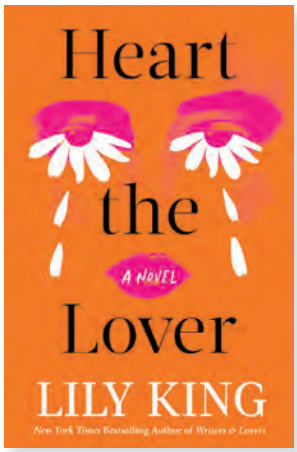
Steven Cohan's study of the film disentangles its production history and subsequent notoriety from the film itself, reconsidering the ways in which it playfully challenged gender conventions of the 1950s.

Friends and Liars
A Novel

Kit Frick G'12

An insidious thriller about four estranged friends trapped in a powerful family's deadly games at a luxe estate in the Italian countryside.

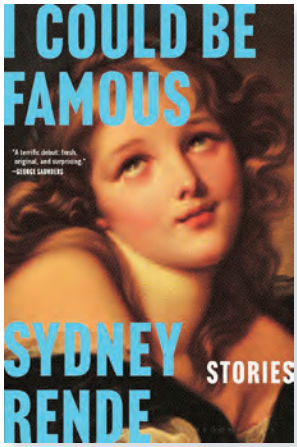
Scan the QR code with your phone camera to find more books by creative writing alumni or visit go.syr.edu/as/alumni-books.



Heart the Lover
A Novel

Lily King G'95

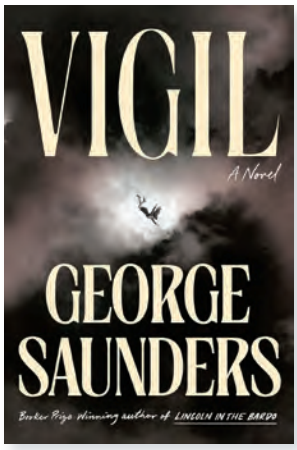
From *The New York Times* best-selling author of *Writers & Lovers* comes a magnificent and intimate new novel of desire, friendship and the lasting impact of first love.



I Could Be Famous
Stories

Sydney Rende G'21

For fans of *Homesick for Another World* and HBO's *Girls*, a magnetic debut story collection following 10 ambitious women and one male superstar as they pursue their desires—however deluded—for more.

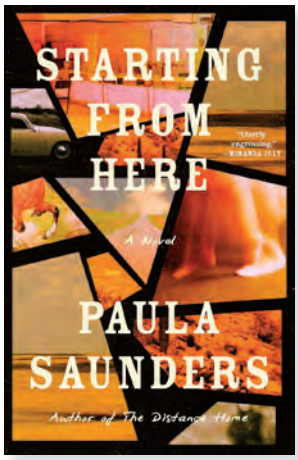


Vigil
A Novel

(Available January 27, 2026)

George Saunders G'88
Professor of English

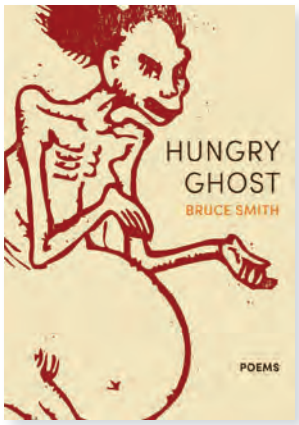
A wise, playful, electric novel from the #1 *New York Times* best-selling, Booker Prize-winning author of *Lincoln in the Bardo*, taking place at the bedside of an oil company CEO in the twilight hours of his life as he is ferried from this world into the next.



Starting from Here
A Novel

Paula Saunders G'87

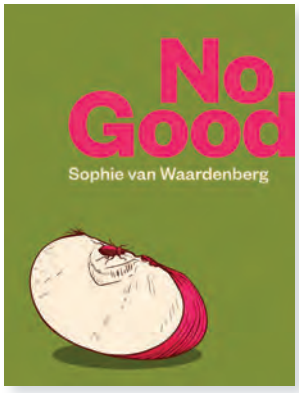
A Midwestern girl balances her dreams of becoming a dancer with the complications of growing up on her own, far from her working-class family, in this "stirring, stunning novel about the desire for a certain kind of life and the quest to find it."



Hungry Ghost
Poems

Bruce Smith
Professor of English

From Whitman and Dickinson to Rihanna and George Floyd, themes of societal and personal chaos lead to sudden moments of clarity in this collection from one of America's most lauded poets.



No Good
Poems

Sophie van Waardenberg G'22

A highly anticipated first poetry collection that is raw and warm and human.

NEWS & AWARDS

At age 66, **George Saunders G'88** became the youngest recipient of the National Book Award for Distinguished Contributions to American Letters since 2004. A new opera based on Saunders' first novel, *Lincoln in the Bardo*, also began production in 2025 and is set to premiere during the Met's 2026-2027 season.

Not only is **Mona Awad's** bestselling novel *Bunny* currently being developed for film with Bad Robot Productions, but the recently released sequel, *We Love You, Bunny*, was one of five books shortlisted for the 2025 Giller Prize, an annual award recognizing the best in Canadian fiction.

Game On!

Meet three A&S alumni whose careers in sports showcase the versatility of their liberal arts education.

A&S alumna Adrienne Scherenzel oversees community relations and philanthropic outreach for the Chicago Bulls organization.

Building Community Through Sport and Service

Adrienne Scherenzel ’98 has always believed in the power of connection, whether on the track, in the classroom or across the neighborhoods of Chicago. As a psychology major and standout student-athlete at Syracuse University, she balanced academics with a record-setting track career, earning All-Big East honors and multiple relay records alongside her twin sister, Melanie. Her time at Syracuse laid the foundation for a career rooted in public service, health equity and community leadership.

Originally from the suburbs of Toronto, Scherenzel was recruited to Syracuse after a coach spotted her and her sister at a track meet in Ottawa. That moment, she says, changed the trajectory of her life. “I feel like I’m living the American dream every day,” she reflects. “And that started at Syracuse University.”

After graduating from SU and earning a doctorate in podiatric medicine in Chicago, Scherenzel developed a passion for public health that led her to roles in major school districts and nonprofits, including serving as senior policy advisor to Arne Duncan, former U.S. secretary of education. That experience, combined with her deep ties to Chicago’s communities, made her a natural fit for her current role as vice president of community engagement and executive director of Chicago Bulls Charities.

Today, she oversees a team of ten and leads initiatives that span player programs, alumni relations, philanthropy and grassroots outreach.

Scherenzel credits her liberal arts education for giving her the confidence to navigate a diverse career path. “It gave me the foundation to be transferable across so many fields,” she says.

Crafting a Career in Sports Journalism

Jared Diamond ’10 has always known where he was headed. From his earliest days in high school, he was writing for his local paper and dreaming of covering Major League Baseball. That clarity of purpose led him to Syracuse University, where he pursued a dual major in English and textual studies in A&S and journalism at S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, a combination that would prove essential to his success.

Drawn to Syracuse for its myriad opportunities around high-level Division I athletics, Diamond wasted no time getting involved. On his first day on campus, before even unpacking his bags, he walked into *The Daily Orange* in search of a sports writing opportunity. That initiative landed him his first beat—cross country—and launched a college career filled with reporting, writing and real-world experience.

One of Diamond’s most unforgettable experiences came during his junior year, when he reported on the legendary six-overtime basketball game between Syracuse and UConn in the 2009 Big East Tournament. “It’s still one of the most amazing things I’ve ever covered,” he says. His story for *The Daily Orange*, headlined *Six in the City*, became an instant catchphrase and even appeared on T-shirts. “I didn’t get a cent of royalties,” he jokes, “but it was an unbelievable experience.”

As a sportswriter for The Wall Street Journal, *A&S alumnus Jared Diamond (second from left) travels the globe covering major sporting events, including the 2024 Summer Olympic Games in Paris.*

Diamond's decision to pair journalism with a liberal arts education was intentional. "No matter how great your journalism fundamentals are...to really make it as a journalist, you have to have a wide breadth of knowledge," he says. His English and textual studies coursework gave him the opportunity to read and write extensively, helping him develop a strong voice and deep appreciation for storytelling. "The best way to become a better writer is to read good writing. There's no substitute for that."

That broad foundation has served him well in his role at *The Wall Street Journal*, where he's covered multiple World Series, the Olympics and major stories like the Astros' sign-stealing scandal.

Diamond's journey as a sports reporter and published author exemplifies the power of preparation, persistence and the kind of well-rounded education that empowers students to chase their biggest dreams.

Health in Motion On and Off the Field

Attention to detail has always been a priority for Dr. Marc Fineberg '89. As a biology major in A&S, he recalls meticulously scheduling every 15-minute block of his week on graph paper—balancing intense coursework, lab time and social life. Developing this time management skill became a critical habit that helped him navigate the rigors of academics and personal life, from Syracuse through medical school and beyond.

It was all part of a plan he began crafting in high school in Williamsville, a suburb of Buffalo, New York. There, he set his sights on becoming the team doctor for Buffalo's major sports teams—the Bills and Sabres—and reverse-engineered his career to achieve that goal.

Syracuse not only provided a solid scientific foundation but also helped Fineberg become a more well-rounded scholar through its liberal arts curriculum. This balance enabled him to thrive, including earning a 4.0 GPA during a demanding semester while pledging a fraternity. His Syracuse experience laid the groundwork for his acceptance into Northwestern's prestigious medical school.

"I can tell anybody who attends Syracuse University that it's just a matter of having a dream and a plan, and taking it day by day," Fineberg reflects.

After graduating from Northwestern, he completed his residency at New York University and a sports medicine fellowship at Harvard. Along the way, he built a reputation for excellence, ultimately realizing his dream as team physician for the Bills and Sabres.

As the Bills' team physician, Fineberg's expertise was especially vital when Bills player Damar Hamlin suffered cardiac arrest in 2023. His swift action helped save Hamlin's life and inspired a community-wide initiative to train over 25,000 people in hands-only CPR.

"I just had to follow the template I created when I was 18 years old," he says. "And in hindsight, it seems effortless—even though it was thousands of hours of hard work."

Outside of orthopedics and sports medicine, Fineberg is proud of a real estate venture he launched with his son, Justin '20. It's a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit that runs through their family and which traces its roots back to Syracuse. After years of success in medicine, Fineberg partnered with Justin to create Dofi Properties, a real estate development firm named in honor of Marc's late father.

Justin, a graduate of Syracuse's Whitman School of Management with a dual focus in entrepreneurship and real estate, has been instrumental to the company's success.

"You can follow our trails back to the days at Syracuse," Fineberg says.

(Left) Fineberg providing medical attention to former Bills player Von Miller during a game against the Detroit Lions in 2022. (Right) Fineberg with Damar Hamlin at Super Bowl LVII.

"I can tell anybody who attends Syracuse University that it's just a matter of having a dream and a plan, and taking it day by day."

Marc Fineberg '89

A&S Alumni Dispatches

Alice K. Boatwright '69 Published *Shadows of Vietnam*, a new edition of *Collateral Damage*.

Brinda Charry '05 Ph.D. Awarded the 18th biannual 2025 Society of American Historians Prize for Historical Fiction (James Fenimore Cooper Prize). Won the 2025 Society of American Historians Prize for Historical Fiction for her novel *The East Indian*, set in 1630s colonial Virginia and based on her dissertation research.

Jeffrey Cohen '76 Appointed to Aspira Women's Health Inc. Board of Directors.

Michael D. Dwyer '10 Ph.D. Published *Tinsel and Rust: How Hollywood Manufactured the Rust Belt* with Oxford University Press.

Steve Featherstone '96 M.A. Won four awards at a nationwide outdoor writing contest for his work with Syracuse.com.

Gina P. Goldhammer '72 Published *Where Snowbirds Play*, winner of the 2025 Florida Authors and Publishers Award for Adult Fiction.

Bill Hamilton '92, G'99 Appointed to the John T. Perry Jr. Professorship in Research Science at Washington and Lee University.

Stephanie Joyce '07 Named principal at Baker Newman Noyes, a Portland, Maine-based accounting and advisory firm.

Peter Kissel '69 Published *Three Patriots: The Hopes and Trials of My Immigrant Ancestors in Civil War America*.

Meredith Madden '13, G'16 Published *The Empty Nester's Gifts: 52 Weeks of Affirmation, Reflection, and Practice to Tend the Heart and Nurture Your Life in This Season*.

Craig J. MacKenzie '01 Joined The Savings Bank as executive vice president and chief operating officer.

Hannah Messinger '11 Named to Poets & Quants' 2025 Best & Brightest Online MBA list for her work at Carnegie Mellon's Tepper School of Business.

Shreerekha Pillai '99 MFA Appointed dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

Dr. Kerone Thomas '05 Celebrated the fifth anniversary of Health Renew Medical Centre, which she opened in Jamaica.

Yuchien Wang '19 Named "One Under 30" by Branding in Asia, a special feature focused on rising talent in the advertising and marketing world.

Matt Wiley '94 Appointed chief commercial officer at Mind Medicine (MindMed) Inc., a biopharmaceutical company developing treatments for brain health disorders.

Randi Williams '04 Appointed assistant professor in the Department of Oncology at Georgetown University, researching methods to promote the adoption of evidence-based lung cancer control practices to advance health equity.

Katie Wojdyla '04 Promoted to chief marketing officer for Innovative Attraction Management.

Marilyn Wolfe '61 Published *Death on Dickens Island* (writing as Allison Brook), the first book in a new mystery series.

Gretchen Wood '92 Received the 2025 CASE Commonfund College and University Foundation Award.

CONGRATULATIONS, A&S ENTREPRENEURS!

THESE EIGHT A&S alumni were among those honored at November's 'CUSE50 Alumni Entrepreneur celebration.

Ron Balchandani '16
Janet Elkin '78
Jamie Navarro '92
Jason O'Leary '96
Enrique Soler-Armstrong '85
Matthew Tarullo '04
Javier Tirado '95
Kristopher Venne '95

The November 13 ceremony recognized the best in Orange ingenuity and revealed the fastest-growing alumni businesses. Honorees also headlined the Student Summit, in which students networked with entrepreneurs and explored launching startups. It also featured a student pitch competition, where campus teams competed for a $5,000 grand prize selected by 'CUSE50 honorees.

Updates based on alumni submissions or public news sources. Send career and contact information to cc.syr.edu/AandSUpdate. Updates may be published at the editor's discretion and may be edited for length and clarity.

In the Headlines

A&S faculty put news, science and culture into perspective, so individuals and policy makers have the facts at their fingertips.

"DNA testing methods questioned in Gilgo Beach murder case"

CBS News | February 26, 2025

"Rather than look at 24 to 27 areas of the DNA, which is what we typically do in forensic cases, we look at thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of different variations in the DNA. If you think about your DNA, a lot of people think of it as a sequence of letters. We're looking for differences in those letters. We share most of our DNA with each other. We're looking for those differences, and those differences can provide information as to the identity of an individual."

Michael Marciano, professor of practice and director for research for the Forensic and National Security Sciences Institute

"TikTok is full of ADHD advice; just don't trust it for a diagnosis"

NPR | March 24, 2025

"If you spend enough time on TikTok, you're going to find hundreds of videos that you could walk away from saying, 'That's me, I think I have ADHD.' They already have a self-diagnosis that's been made based on this content and arrive at our office telling us they have ADHD. In fact, quite often now they're telling us the type and the dose of medication they want to treat this."

Kevin Antshel, professor of psychology

"Should we be bringing back extinct species? Ethical concerns raised after dire wolf allegedly resurrected" ↑

ABC News | April 11, 2025

"All claims of de-extinction are the invocation of a metaphor, and what they have produced and what they will at some point produce, may be technologically impressive, but they are not and never can be the actual previously extinct creatures. Only adult dire wolves can raise a dire wolf, and there aren't any....One thing that we know for sure, that they are not, is dire wolves."

Samuel Gorovitz, professor of philosophy

"How a Ford Factory in Milpitas Changed the Face of a Town" ↑

KQED | May 15, 2025

"At every point in time as this is being developed…[there were always] these barriers that would be thrown out there. You can't build this here because of sewage. You can't do this because of this. You can't do this because of that."

Herbert G. Ruffin II, associate professor of African American studies

"Humpback Whales Are Blowing 'Bubble Rings' at Boats. Are They Trying to Communicate?"

Scientific American | June 19, 2025

"It's a really fun paper. It reads like a detective story that's trying to piece together information about something that's not widely studied and happens rarely. I may have seen them before and never really thought anything of them."

Susan Parks, professor of biology

"Denver Museum Finds a Dinosaur Fossil Under Its Parking Lot"

New York Times | July 12, 2025

"Poking the Earth with what amounts to a needle and coming up with a dinosaur is more like fiction than reality. Even if the find itself is not that groundbreaking, it is a fun discovery that underscores how much there is to learn when we look at the ground beneath our feet."

Christopher Junium, associate professor of Earth and environmental sciences and director of graduate studies: geobiology, astrobiology, paleoclimate, paleoceanography

"What would Americans really do for $1 million? Survey reveals shocking truth"

New York Post | July 26, 2025

"People often think they would act a certain way when confronted with a scenario, but are wrong. Framing a friend for murder is much more disturbing. A nontrivial number of people regard morality as a sucker's game."

Ben Bradley, Allan and Anita Sutton Professor of Philosophy

"'Evil twin black moon' to arrive in days as people think it's the 'End of Days'"

Daily Star | August 20, 2025

"A black moon is just a second new moon that happens in one calendar month. If a new moon occurs near the beginning of the month, the next one can happen before it's over. From a scientific perspective, this is no different than any other new moon."

Walter Freeman, teaching professor of physics

"Call Me Maybe? New Cellphone Ban Impacts CNY Families" ↑

315Mom | September 2, 2025

"Laptops hinder as well but less so, as they are more public and more noticeable and are less habit-forming. It's particularly important to do this in adolescence or younger in order to help them adapt those strategies when they are still flexible and able to change."

Matthew Mulvaney, undergraduate program director and associate professor of human development and family science

"Quest Is on for a 'Super-Tolerable' Weight-Loss Drug"

Bio IT World | September 30, 2025

"[We're] focused on making drugs that are not just safe but super-tolerable, so they can have a quality of life that is unmatched while they are being treated. Because the drugs are so tolerable, you can often dose higher, which means their prognosis is also improved."

Robert Doyle, Jack and Laura H. Milton Professor and Dean's Professor of Chemistry

"Sea Otters and Museums Are Feeling Taylor Swift's Midas Touch"

The New York Times | October 23, 2025

"Part of the definition of being a fan is being a collector in a way, whether you're collecting merchandise, the recordings, tour posters, whatever the case may be. But you also collect experiences. And to me, making that trip to the museum is a way of collecting an experience that ties into what Taylor Swift means to you."

Theo Cateforis, associate professor of art and music histories, director of undergraduate studies in music history and cultures and director of undergraduate studies in fine arts

"David Harbour's comments, those Lily Allen claims and why so many are hooked on the drama"

USA Today | November 3, 2025

"It gives people more to grab onto, and have theories. It resonates with struggles people can connect to: betrayal, divorce, a breakdown. These things are relatable. People want to make meaning."

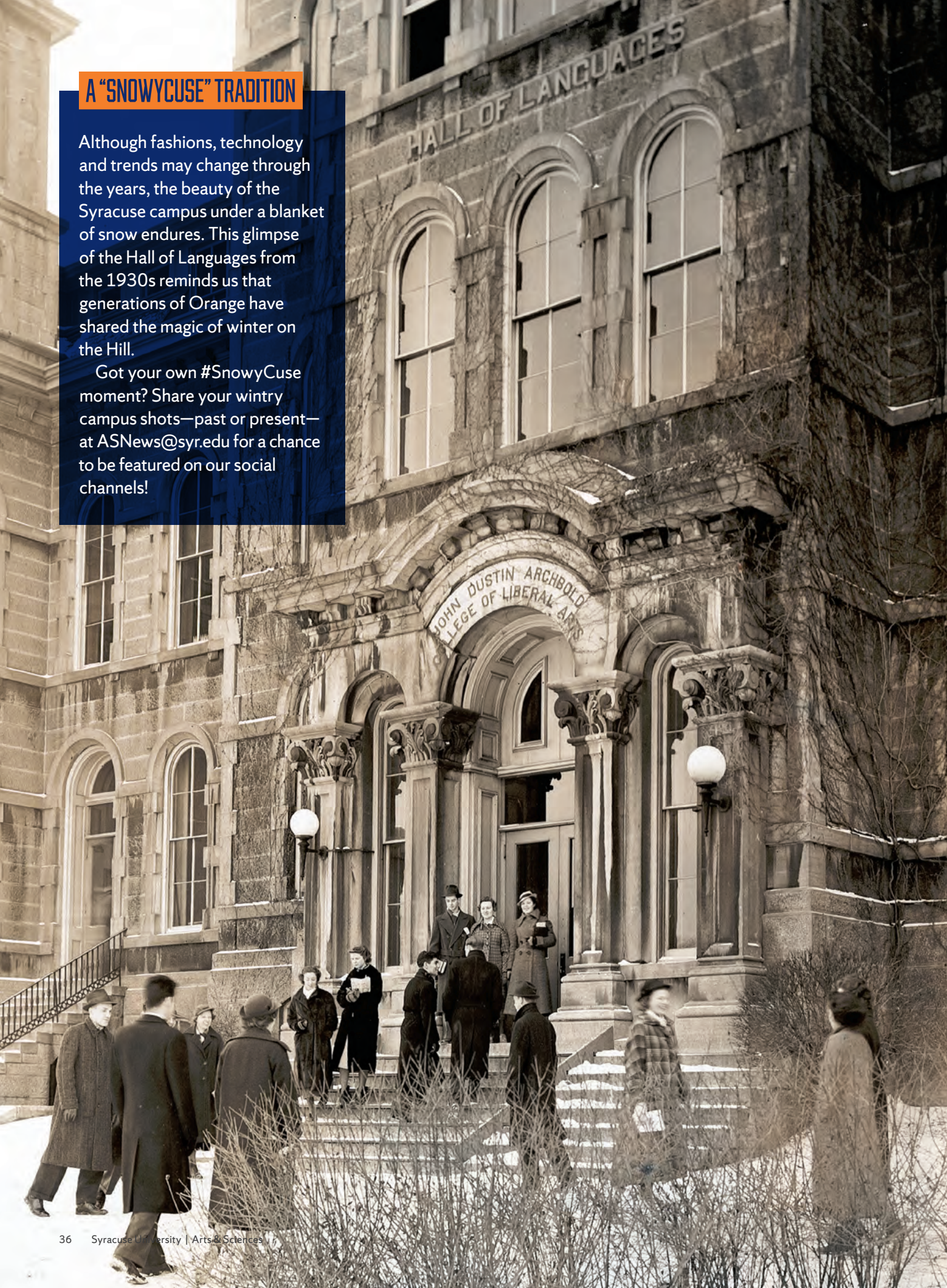
Eman Tadros, assistant professor of human development and family science

Scan the QR code with your phone camera to read more headlines or visit go.syr.edu/as/in-the-news.

A "SNOWYCUSE" TRADITION

Although fashions, technology and trends may change through the years, the beauty of the Syracuse campus under a blanket of snow endures. This glimpse of the Hall of Languages from the 1930s reminds us that generations of Orange have shared the magic of winter on the Hill.

Got your own #SnowyCuse moment? Share your wintry campus shots—past or present—at ASNews@syr.edu for a chance to be featured on our social channels!



The Dean's Advisory Board

The Dean's Advisory Board is composed of accomplished alumni, parents and friends who are among our most generous supporters, staunchest stewards and fiercest advocates. With their diverse professional expertise and leadership experience, they are important advisors in enhancing the Arts and Sciences experience.

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Northrop Grumman Corp. (retired)
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Richard W. Babinecz, PLLC
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New York

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Aspen, Colorado

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Boston

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Washington, D.C.

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Boston Consulting Group, Henderson Institute
New York

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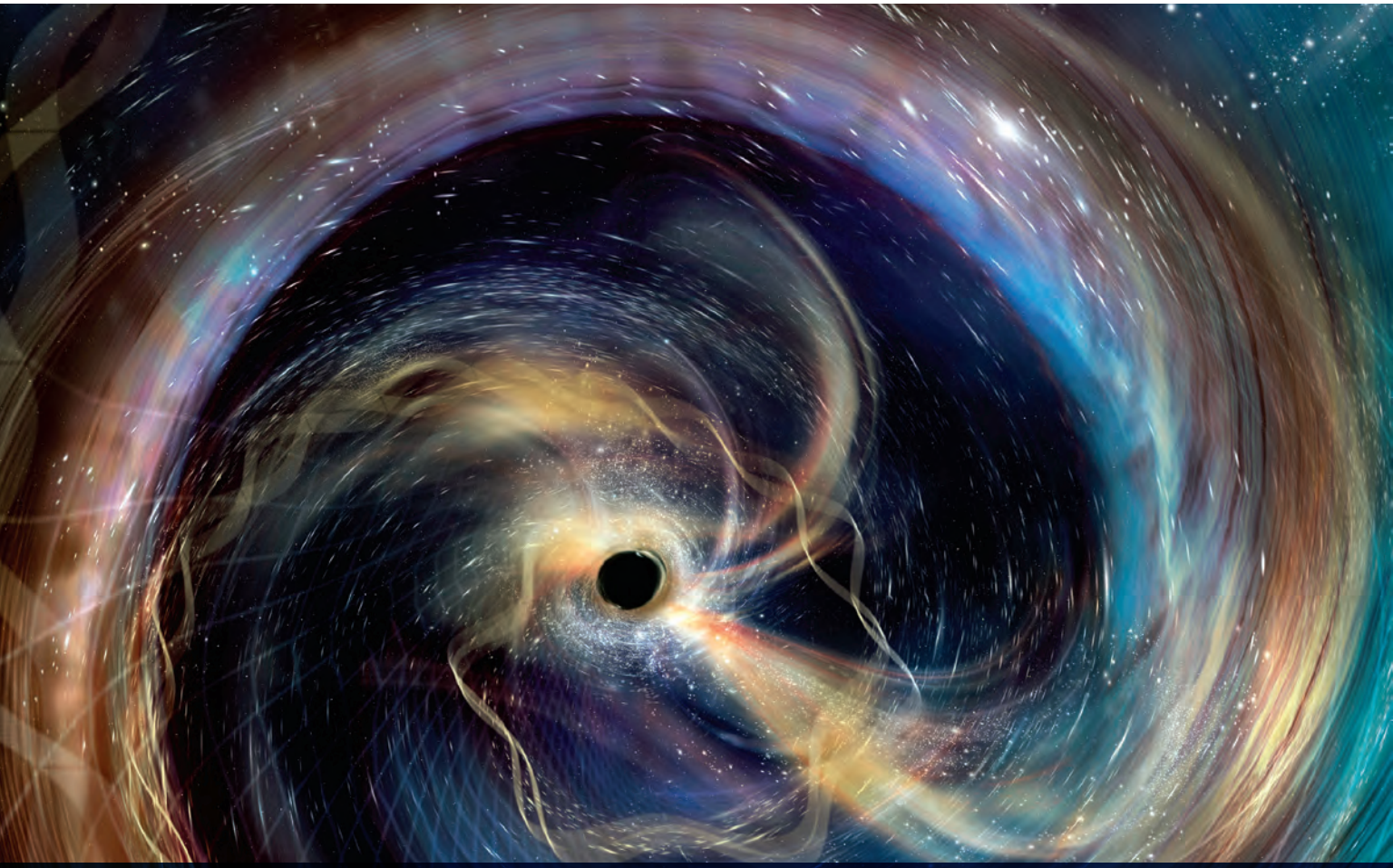

In 2025, A&S celebrated the ten-year anniversary of its physicists helping detect gravitational waves, caused by colliding black holes a billion light years away (artist's rendering above). Discoveries like this thrive on the creative, interdisciplinary thinking cultivated in all A&S students and often lead to down-to-earth advances in medicine, science and technology.

Update career and contact information at:
cc.syr.edu/AandSupdate

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Thank you!