

# New Tulane center aims to reimagine humanities for a changing world

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news@tulane.edu



The new Tulane Global Humanities Center aims to strengthen the humanities community, expand global and transnational research and highlight New Orleans and the Gulf South's connections to the Caribbean, Africa and Latin America.

At a time when the humanities are facing many challenges, Tulane University's School of Liberal Arts is expanding its commitment to the humanities with the opening of the Tulane Global Humanities Center (TGHC).

"Tulane is the ideal place to center humanistic inquiry into the great challenges and opportunities of the emerging world order," said Brian T. Edwards, dean of the School of Liberal Arts, during the launch of the center on Monday, Sept. 8. "This center will make vital contributions to public dialogue through interdisciplinary,

open-ended inquiry not dictated by political or economic imperatives.”

Edwards outlined the new center’s mission: to strengthen Tulane’s humanities community, expand global and transnational research and highlight New Orleans and the Gulf South’s connections to the Caribbean, Africa and Latin America. The center will also boost innovation through funding, fellowships and collaborative working groups.

The first biennial theme for the center, Global Port Cities, will bring together humanities-based researchers, experts from a wide range of sectors, and community members to explore New Orleans and the Gulf South region, along with port cities from around the world.

Edwards moderated a panel on global port cities with School of Liberal Arts faculty Edwige Tamalet Talbayev and Christopher Dunn, in addition to TGHC postdoctoral fellows Tori Bush and Maryam Athari.

The panel explored the biennial theme through four lenses. Talbayev examined water as a framework reshaping views of port cities, power and culture. Dunn compared growth in Salvador, Brazil, to that of New Orleans. Bush highlighted Gulf South literary traditions revealing enduring power structures, while Athari traced Iranian artists’ maritime travels that shaped a worldly, transnational vision.

Over the course of the coming years, the Tulane Global Humanities Center will bring speakers from across disciplines into conversation and collaboration with Tulane students, faculty and community members, toward the goal of modeling interdisciplinary dialogue that is both local and global in its scope.

Programming will continue throughout the fall semester with lunchtime events every other Monday. The next speaker will be Dr. Vyjayanthi Rao, visiting professor at the Yale School of Architecture and co-Editor-in-Chief of Public Culture. She also serves as chief curator of the Sharjah Architecture Triennial, opening in November 2026. On Monday, Sept. 22, Rao will present her new research, “An Ocean of Air-Rights: Speculative Reconstruction in Contemporary Mumbai.”

TGHC will host a major symposium on Global Port Cities on Jan. 22-23, 2026, which will bring leading scholars, thinkers and artists to campus, featuring dialogues and

panels that represent a wide range of cultures and approaches. The full program and registration information will be announced soon on the TGHC website.