



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES & RELIGIOUS STUDIES

2024-25 Talk & Discussion Series

Humanism in the Age of Digital Media  
**Wake Up!**

**Human Identity as Planetary**

The Paintings of Dr. Maria Jaoudi

**!NEW DATE!**

**Thursday, November 21, 2024, 4:15-5:30 PM**

on Zoom - register at <http://bit.ly/3UqL7J8>



Who are we as a species? Do we identify ourselves with **historically created borders** now called nations and other arbitrary demarcations socially imposed? Or are we humans, **one species among multifarious beings** inhabiting an astounding and awe-inspiring planet filled with abundant life?

This viewing of the paintings of Dr. Maria Jaoudi, accompanied by music and themes for reflection, asks each of us to really look at **our human situation in our planetary home** and examine **who we really are**. It will be followed by opportunities for participants to share their own experiences relating to the paintings and content presented in the paintings.

This is the inaugural event for the “Humanism in the Digital Media Age” series, which will bring faculty, staff and students together in panels and breakout groups to hear and understand each others’ contrasting perspectives regarding contentious issues.



**Stay Tuned for Upcoming Events in the Series - Spring 2025**



2024-25 Talk & Discussion Series

# Humanism in the Age of Digital Media

## Series Overview

The past 35 years of human history have seen increased reliance on digital tools for communication. First email and the internet connected the globe, and then mobile devices expanded the internet's reach. Today social media, driven by increasingly powerful algorithms, has drawn most of the world's population into a vast web of communication networks.

The benefits of this communication expansion are undeniable, yet in the past decade significant drawbacks have also become apparent. Mainstream communication platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X) prioritize grabbing as much of users' attention as possible on behalf of third-party influencers, mostly advertisers, incentivizing the airing of increasingly polarized views, and the separation of polarized factions into interest groups that often refuse to engage or even listen to each other.

This series considers the role of humanism as a powerful third voice with the potential to break the gridlock of digital polarization at this critical juncture in the evolution of human communication. Originally an intellectual movement of the Renaissance, the notion of humanism has continued to evolve as it spreads across the globe and revives in the West, often integrating indigenous and grassroots notions of common humanity, uniting people across ethnic and religious and opposing identity-based hatred. Most recently the notion of "humane technology" has fueled new forms of activism aimed at reforming digital communication in alignment with globally applied humanistic principles.

The series will bring together panels and breakout groups of faculty, staff and students to hear and understand each others' contrasting perspectives regarding contentious issues. Moderators will ask participants to prioritize the humanist principle of respectful listening, encouraging questions designed to further understanding and uncover common values. Each event will also invite participants to reflect on the evolving role that a new technology-informed, global humanism might play in restoring balance to the many imbalances exacerbated by polarizing forms of digital communication.



Co-Sponsored by  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES & RELIGIOUS STUDIES**  
and the **DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

