

November 2025 Guest speaker

November 18 - Writing as a Pathway to Global Understanding



Ava Homa is an acclaimed author, speaker, activist, and faculty member at California State University, Monterey Bay. Her debut novel, *Daughters of Smoke and Fire* (HarperCollins & Abrams, 2020), was featured in Roxane Gay's [Book Club](#), the Unplugged Book Box, and [Women for Women](#) International. The novel earned a place among the 'best books' in outlets such as the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Independent* (UK), and *Globe and Mail* (Canada). It received the 2020 Nautilus Silver Book Award for Fiction and was a 2022 William Saroyan International Writing

Prize finalist. A groundbreaking work in English by a Kurdish woman, *Daughters of Smoke and Fire* has been incorporated into university curricula at institutions such as George Mason University, the University of Toronto, and Southern Methodist University.

Ava's collection of short stories, *Echoes from the Other Land*, was nominated for the 2011 Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award. Her essays, written in English, Kurdish, and Persian, have been published in outlets like the *BBC*, *Literary Review of Canada*, *Open Democracy*, and *Literary Hub*. Her short stories and non-fiction pieces have been anthologized and she has delivered speeches across North America and Europe, including a memorable appearance at the [United Nations](#) in Geneva. She holds a master's degree in creative writing and is a 2023 California Arts Council [fellow](#).