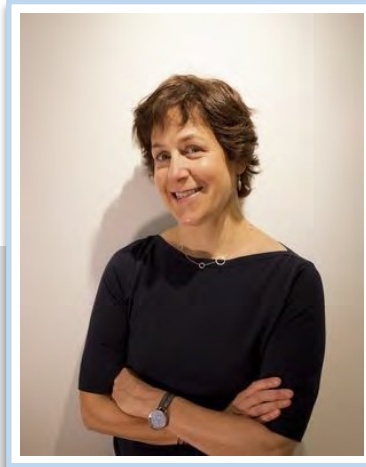

DEAN'S NEWSLETTER



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On New Year's Eve, we turned the calendar page and celebrated – at long last, we could put 2020, *annus horribilis*, behind us!

Of course, the relief we felt was short-lived. On January 6th, we were rocked by the violence of the Capitol Insurrection. The terrorists acted out their claims of white supremacy, with flags proclaiming their religious “right” and T-shirts espousing hatred and anti-Semitism.

A few weeks later, President Biden and Vice-President Harris were inaugurated, in accordance with the Constitution that the mob (and many of our elected officials) had wanted to ignore. Rather than promoting one “right” religion, the new administration embodies a number of different faith traditions. We can be hopeful about what this represents in terms of interreligious understanding.

In our interreligious, interdisciplinary home at the GTU, we teach critical thinking, we learn within ethical frameworks, and we demonstrate mutual respect. We must redouble our efforts, individually and collectively. Since January 6th, I've heard a similar comment from faculty, staff, and students: we're glad to be part of the GTU, where, despite our differences, we share a commitment to building a *more just, peaceful, and sustainable world*.

One of the wonderful things about academia is that each new semester offers us the chance for renewal. We might undertake new classes, focus on new academic milestones, or initiate new research. We might update a syllabus or reengage with work we've left unfinished. As we begin the Spring semester, let's also try to remember how our own small efforts can contribute to broader positive change. Wishing you all a peaceful and productive Spring 2021!

Elizabeth S Peña

Elizabeth S. Peña, PhD

Interim Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Academic Accomplishments

Comprehensive Proposal Approved

Reem T. Kosba, HCSR
Robert David Coolidge, HCSR
Leonard D. McMahon, THET

Oral Comprehensive Passed

Christian Suba, HCSR

Oral Comprehensive Passed with Distinction

Kelly M. Colwell, REPR, Distinction
Kyprianos Koutsokoumnis, HCSR, Distinction
Matthew Hartman, THET, Distinction
Hye Hyun Han, HCSR, Distinction

Dissertation Successfully Defended

Kristin Stoneking, IDS
Zachary Markwith, CRLG



Important Reminders

- ◆ The deadline to successfully defend your thesis/dissertation (without paying fees for Spring 2021) is **February 12, 2021**.
- ◆ The deadline to file completed and approved thesis/dissertation will be **April 1, 2021**



Coffee Hour with the Dean

Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday, 9-10am PST
join Interim Dean Dr. Elizabeth S. Peña
on Zoom for a casual coffee hour!

- ❖ MA & Certificate Students –
2nd Tuesday of the month
- ❖ PhD Students –
4th Tuesday of the month

*Faculty and Staff can join either
coffee hour

Zoom Meeting ID: 919 7110 288

Berkeley Journal of Religion and Theology

2021 Call for Papers

The Berkeley Journal of Religion and Theology (BJRT) is the double-blind, peer-reviewed journal of the Graduate Theological Union. The mission of the BJRT is to be an inclusive and diverse forum of original, leading edge scholarship in inter-religious studies, philosophy, and theology that reflects the GTU's endeavor to be a nexus for "where religion meets the world."



To this end, the editors of the BJRT invite scholars from pertinent disciplines and backgrounds to submit articles and book reviews for publication in the journal. The deadline for all submissions for the next regular issue (Vol. 7) is **March 1, 2021**.

Instructions for submission and a Style Guide for authors and book reviewers are available on the BJRT website (bjrt.gtu.edu)

For more information, please email the managing editor at bjrt@ses.gtu.edu

Reviewers Needed

The BJRT is looking for more reviewers to serve on our Peer Review Board for the upcoming Volume 7. GTU current students and alums are eligible to serve on the Peer Review Board, and are not assigned more than two articles for a particular volume to review. If interested, please send an email with your name, area of concentration, and a list of research interests to bjrt@ses.gtu.edu.

Additionally, the BJRT has Department Editor openings. Department Editors assist with curating articles and communicating with Peer Reviewers in particular areas of concentration. There are Department Editor openings for the following:

- Historical and Cultural Studies of Religion (HCSR)
- Religion and Practice (PRAC)
- Sacred Texts (SATX)



If interested, please send an email with your name, desired area of concentration and a current CV.

Follow BJRT on [Facebook](#) and [Academia.com](#)

From the Library

Opportunities to Learn and Connect

If it's been a while since you've done library research, we have prepared a number of methods that you can learn about library research and resources.

1. **Videos:** We have recorded the orientation workshop, a video about new databases, a tutorial on the free citation manager Zotero, and a Grammarly tutorial. <https://www.gtu.edu/library/get-help/library-workshops>
2. **Live online help:** If you have questions, Librarian Stephanie Miller will be hosting a zoom Q&A on Getting Back into Research on **February 2nd from 3pm-4pm** (Pacific time). RSVP not required, just pop into zoom meeting: 5106492501. Can't make it? You can ask librarians any research questions you have live on chat from 9am-4pm on weekdays.
3. **Online Guides:** Step by step guides can walk you through beginning your research or in-depth focus on a topic. Guides and Tutorials are available from the Library Website, but our two most popular guides are the Getting Started Guide: <https://libguides.gtu.edu/getstarted> and Biblical Exegesis: <https://libguides.gtu.edu/exegesis>
4. **Email and zoom:** Questions can be sent to library@gtu.edu and we can meet you for a one-on-one zoom, just send us an email or chat to set up a time.



Looking for more information about curbside pickup, scanning services, or in-library appointments? Visit: <https://www.gtu.edu/library>



From the Library

Archives Update

Despite the pandemic, GTU Archives has continued to accept a few donations. The most noteworthy collections are:

- ◆ SHARE Foundation Collection, SHARE (Salvadoran Humanitarian Aid, Research and Education) Foundation was founded as a faith-based organization in 1981 (11 boxes). This supplements our extensive Sanctuary and Central American collections: <https://www.gtu.edu/library/resources/special-collections/featured-collections/sanctuary-movement>
- ◆ The Papers of Thomas and Donna Ambrogio, servants of peace and justice causes. Thomas (1930-2015) left the priesthood and married Donna Myers in 1969. In 1980 he became director of the Commission on Social Justice for the Archdiocese of San Francisco, where he played a major role in the formulation of the US Catholic bishops' national pastoral letter, "The Challenge of Peace." He was fired by the Archbishop for supporting a report on LGBT rights. He was one of the founders of the National Sanctuary Defense Fund. Donna (1929-2020) met Thomas when she was teaching at Alma College, now Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University. A graduate of the University of Chicago, University of San Francisco, GTU (MA), and Stanford law school, she worked along with her husband for social justice and was a teacher and advocate of Aging Law and Health Law (5 boxes).



For additional information on GTU Archives and Special Collections, go to <https://www.gtu.edu/library/resources/special-collections> and <http://www.gtuarchives.org/cdm/>



Interreligious Chaplaincy Program


ICP Welcomes Spring 2021 Fellows

The Interreligious Chaplaincy Program and the Richard S. Dinner Center for Jewish Studies (CJS) are pleased to announce the Spring 2021 ICP-CJS Fellows:

- ◇ Alan Shore
- ◇ Brandt Miller
- ◇ Hashaw Elkins
- ◇ Mia Simone Trachtenberg

This fellowship provides funding for courses towards a Certificate in Interreligious Chaplaincy for students affiliated with the Richard S. Dinner Center for Jewish Studies. Each fellow will receive an award of \$3000 made possible through the generous support of Taube Philanthropies.

The Interreligious Chaplaincy Program at the GTU is unique in its approach to spiritual care by focusing on interreligious competency and inclusion of minorities. These fellows have demonstrated excellence in their commitment to the appreciation of differences as well as service to all communities, including their Jewish community.



DEAR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS:

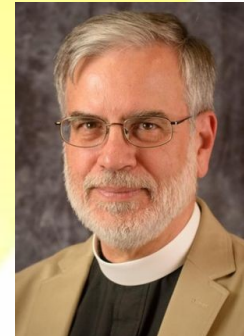
MID-YEAR ORIENTATION

FEB 3, 2021. WED. 11 AM - 12 NOON

Zoom ID: 988 4208 9000

SPOTLIGHT

Q&A with Dr. Arthur G. Holder



How long have you been at the GTU?

I was on faculty at CDSP from 1986 to 2002 and at the GTU since then, so I count this as my 35th year in the consortium.

What’s your role on the Dean’s Team?

As Associate Dean of Academic Affairs during this period of interim leadership, I have three primary responsibilities: Director of the PhD Program, Director of Assessment (Taskstream), and Accreditation Liaison Officer.

What’s one thing that you think makes the GTU unique?

Over the years, many MA and PhD students have told me that when they were exploring options for graduate studies, other prospective schools told them that their research interests were too unconventional, too interdisciplinary, or too specialized. But when they came to the GTU, we said, “That’s sounds great! How can we help?” I love the GTU spirit of innovation and openness, and the connection between academic research and practical engagement in the world.

Outside of work, what’s one of your favorite pastimes?

My wife Sarah and I are huge fans of European murder mysteries on TV. Besides the challenge of trying to guess “whodunit,” we enjoy seeing the scenery in countries that we have visited (and some we haven’t) and listening to the dialogue while reading the subtitles. There are some phrases (mostly curse words, unfortunately) that I can now recognize in a half dozen different languages.



Center for the Arts & Religion

Art Window

New year, new art in the window! This February, we are honored to show a collaboration between the two Oakland-based collectives [See Black Womxn](#) and [She Bends](#). This neon piece seeks to lift up and literally illuminate the voices of Black women.



see black womxn
hear black womxn
trust black womxn
love black womxn
protect black womxn
pay black womxn



SHE BENDS

And in case you missed it! Be sure to watch the recorded Artist Panel Discussion with *Art Window* artists [Ora Clay](#), [Elizabeth Jiménez Montelongo](#), and [Shirin Khalatbari](#), held on Thursday, January 21, 2021: <https://youtu.be/KeUdBQ8PAp8>



Center for the Arts & Religion

CARe Workshops

This semester, CARe will continue to offer an array of online workshops covering a wide variety of themes in the arts and religion. Each topic is covered by two 2-hour-long workshops. Open to students and community members alike, each workshop pair carries a \$100 fee. CARe workshops are open to all - no experience in any of the fields necessary!

GTU students, please note that these are not credit-earning workshops.

The Right Way to Experience Art

February 17 and February 18, 3:30-5:30pm (PST)

Instructed by Dr. Sabrina Klein



The Right Way to Experience Art
 Dr. Sabrina Klein
 Wed. Feb. 17 & Thurs. Feb. 18 | 3:30-5:30pm PST

Great works of art challenge us to connect to our own humanity and the humanity of others. Artistic Literacy is a methodology for finding a personal connection to any work of art, regardless of your previous experience with any work or genre. This introductory Artistic Literacy workshop provides an orientation to the methodology while we explore how to bring your curiosity and your own life experiences to any work of art, and discover—both as a group and individually—the meaning that it brings for you.

Poetry from Home & Away

February 16 and February 23, 3:30-5:30pm (PST)

Instructed by Rev. Nate Klug



Poetry from Home and Away
 Rev. Nate Klug
 Tues. Feb. 16 & Wed. Feb. 18 | 3:30-5:30pm PST

From Homer's "Odyssey" to Claudia Rankine's "Citizen", poets have always been exploring what it means to belong. In this workshop, we'll look at poems that explore themes of home, travel, estrangement, and the possibilities for community during a fractured time. We'll read work by Aria Aber, Langston Hughes, Hai-Dang Phan, Elizabeth Bishop, Li Po, Catullus, James Wright, and many more. Each workshop will end with a prompt for our own writing. Open to all levels of poetry experience!

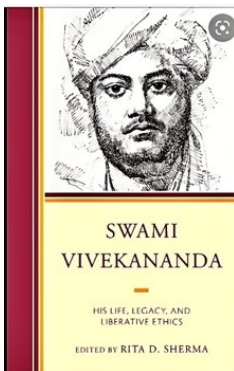
Center for Dharma Studies

Recent Publications



CONTEMPLATIVE STUDIES
AND HINDUISM
MEDITATION, DEVOTION, PRAYER, AND WORSHIP
Edited by
Rita D. Sherma and Purushottama Bilimoria

Contemplative Studies and Hinduism: Meditation, Devotion, Prayer, and Worship (Routledge) Fall 2020
Edited by Rita D. Sherma and P. Bilimoria



SWAMI
VIVEKANANDA
—
HIS LIFE, LEGACY, AND
LIBERATIVE ETHICS
EDITED BY RITA D. SHERMA

Swami Vivekananda: His Life, Legacy, and Liberative Ethics |
Explorations in Indic Traditions: Theological, Ethical, and Philosophical |
(Lexington) January 2021
Edited by Rita D. Sherma

Journal Articles

Healing and Hope in a Time of COVID-19, Climate Calamity, and Broken Communities |
Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies

By Rita D. Sherma

Volume 33 (Fall 2020) | Published by University of Notre Dame



Laura Dunn

Flagship Journal of CDS

Much appreciation to Laura Dunn's excellent editorial management of the keystone journal of the field of Dharma Studies, ***Journal of Dharma Studies: Philosophy, Theology, Ethics, and Culture***.

Editors-in-Chief: Rita D. Sherma, Purushottama Bilimoria

Managing Editor: Laura Dunn

Access online: <https://link.springer.com/journal/42240/volumes-and-issues>

Center for Dharma Studies

Save the date!



VISIONS FOR A VIABLE FUTURE: *IN A TIME OF COVID & CLIMATE CALAMITY*

GTU Sustainable Societies Conference II

Sponsored by Mira & Ajay Shingal Center for Dharma Studies

March 19, 2021



Center for Islamic Studies

Welcome Dr. Mahjabeen Dhala



Dr. Mahjabeen Dhala

CIS/GTU is delighted to welcome **Dr. Mahjabeen Dhala** as Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies and Director of the Madrasa-Midrasha Program, a joint CIS-CJS program. For the full announcement and forthcoming events, please visit our website:

<https://www.gtu.edu/news/dr-mahjabeen-dhala-named-assistant-professor-islamic-studies-and-director-madrasa-midrasha>

Congratulations Carol Bier

Congratulations to **Carol Bier, CIS Research Scholar**. Her entry, "Marāgha," has been published in the *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, 3rd edition*, available online at https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/maragha-COM_36215

She has just completed another entry, "Geometry in Art," also for *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*! We are grateful to Carol for her remarkable work during the pandemic. To learn more, please visit: [**Learning during A Pandemic: A Challenge-A-Day**](#)



Carol Bier

CIS Upcoming Events

CIS Director, Dr. Munir Jiwa and Dr. Mahjabeen Dhala will be teaching a community engaged course this spring: **COVID-19 and Precarious Life**, open to all. Please visit the [GTU website](#) for public programming related to the course and to learn from community organizations in their frontline work during the pandemic as part of the GTU Luce Foundation COVID-19 Community Partnership Grants

CIS is delighted to be hosting a series of events during **Black History Month** and beyond, led by doctoral student Sundiata Al Rashid. Please visit the CIS webpage for more information at: <https://www.gtu.edu/centers/cis>

Center for Jewish Studies

CJS Series of Conversations



Dr. Deena Aranoff (L) and Dr. Sam Shonkoff (R)

Please join CJS for a series of conversations on critical topics in the field of Jewish Studies. These online events will feature presentations from distinguished scholars along with facilitated dialogue and conversation.

- **February 25 @ 12pm PST** — “Space and Time in Rabbinic Judaism”
Charlotte Fonrobert, Richard Hidary, and Deena Aranoff, facilitated by Sam Shonkoff
- **March 18 @ 12pm PST** — “Homeland, Exile, and Diaspora: Contemporary Jewish Reflections”
- **April 22 @ 12pm PST** — "Revelation and Contemporary Jewish Theology"
Michael Fishbane in conversation with Sam Shonkoff

Please check the [CJS Public Events page](#) for updates and announcements.

GTU Professional Development Program

Workshop on

How to Teach an Introductory Course Online?

Facilitated by Dr. Diandra Erickson

Feb 3, Wednesday, 10 - 11 am

Zoom ID: **978 6840 4257**

RSVP: cmotupalli@gtu.edu



Pacific School of Religion: The Center for LGBTQ and Gender Studies in Religion (CLGS)

CLGS Lavender Lunch: “It’s OK Not to Be OK: An Affirming Shin Buddhist Spirituality” with Rev. Blayne Higa

ONLINE | Tuesday, 9 February | 12:15pm - 1:15pm (PST)

Join via Zoom at: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82043841437?
pwd=QXhZclpNVmNpMEpGMUhiaXR5R05HZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82043841437?pwd=QXhZclpNVmNpMEpGMUhiaXR5R05HZz09)

CLGS Jewish Queeries Series: “Queer Jewish Pasts: Histories of LGBTQ Jewish Activism in Europe and the United States” with Dr. Gregg Drinkwater and Jan Wilkens

ONLINE | Tuesday, 24 February | 11:00am - 12:15pm (PST)

Register via Zoom at: <https://www.bit.ly/JewishConf>

CLGS Queer & Latinx Faith Conversations: “Proyecto Bienvenida: Advocating for the Inclusion of LGBTQ Latin@x in Church and Society” with Rev. Rhina Ramos

ONLINE | Tuesday, 24 February | 2:00pm - 3:15pm (PST)

Join via Zoom at: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89971614172?
pwd=aXFzWHk0Q0M2MTZIUHZUQTbvQkxWUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89971614172?pwd=aXFzWHk0Q0M2MTZIUHZUQTbvQkxWUT09)



Center for
**LGBTQ &
GENDER
STUDIES**
in Religion
(CLGS)

Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences

Russell Family Fellowship in Religion and Science

Join CTNS for the Annual Russell Family Fellowship in Religion and Science, with Dr. Kirk Wegter-McNelly, GTU Alum, on Thursday, March 18 through Saturday, March 20, 2021.



Dr. Kirk Wegter-McNelly

Public Presentation

A Strigilated Universe: The Cosmogonic Significance of Primordial Gravitational Radiation

Conference Paper

Engaging Hypotheticals: Groundwork for The Study of Theology in a Secular Academic Context

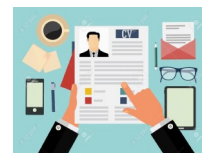
2021 Townes Graduate Student Fellowship in Theology and Science

CTNS is pleased to announce the 2021 competition for the Charles H. Townes Graduate Student Fellowship in Theology and Science.

The purpose of the Townes Fellowship is to publicly recognize and offer modest financial support to doctoral students of the Graduate Theological Union who have demonstrated the clear ability to do highly promising research on issues related to theology and science. The selection is based on academic excellence and students in any Department of the Graduate Theological Union doctoral program whose research focuses on theology and science are eligible to apply.

To apply, please submit:

- 1) a copy of your curriculum vitae
- 2) a sample of your best writing in theology and science



Please note: Students must have completed their comprehensive exams to be eligible to apply. Please submit applications to Melissa Moritz, CTNS Program Associate at mmoritz@gtu.edu. Applications must be received by **5:00pm (PST), Thursday, March 11** to be considered for the award. The winner or winners of the 2021 Townes Fellowship will be announced at the close of the 2021 Russel Research Fellowship Conference, which will be held online via Zoom. Details will be forthcoming.

If you have questions, please contact Melissa Moritz at mmoritz@gtu.edu.

Digital Learning Workshops and Consultations

The Digital Learning Department continues to provide resources to help instructors teach with remote modalities. The Director of Digital Learning is available for 1:1 consultations by appointment and 8 workshops will be offered during the Spring semester. All workshops will take place on **Thursdays and Fridays from 11:00am-12:00pm** until mid-April. Each workshop will take place remotely through Zoom. Please RSVP for each workshop by sending an email to derickson@gtu.edu to receive the Zoom link. Below are the workshops taking place in February:

Moodle's Basics Features

Thursday, February, 11th, 11 am
Friday, February, 12th, 11 am

Syllabus Design for Online Courses

Thursday, February 18th, 11 am
Friday, February 19th, 11 am



Overview of VoiceThread

Thursday, February 25th, 11 am
Friday, February, 26th, 11 am

A banner for a virtual welcome gathering. It features a white background with green leaves scattered around the edges. The text is centered and reads: "INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION warmly invites all students in the GTU consortium to a *Virtual Welcome Gathering* ZOOM ID: 766 545 5724 FEB 5, 2021 | 4:00 - 5:00 PM (PST)".

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
warmly invites all students
in the GTU consortium to a

*Virtual
Welcome
Gathering*

ZOOM ID: 766 545 5724
FEB 5, 2021 | 4:00 - 5:00 PM (PST)

The Dean's Office Spring Lectures

Surjit Singh Lecture

Monday, April 5th, 12:00pm (PT) | Online

The Graduate Theological Union (GTU) is pleased to announce that Dr. Karen Barkey, Haas Distinguished Chair of Religious Diversity and Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, will be presenting the 2021 Surjit Singh Lecture on **April 5, 2021 at 12 pm PST.**



Dr. Karen Barkey

Dr. Barkey is the director of the Center for Democracy, Toleration and Religion, located at Social Science Matrix and the co-director of the Berkeley Center for the Study of Religion. She is also one of the curators of the traveling Shared Sacred Sites exhibition. Her most recent work relates to issues of religious diversity and coexistence, with particular research on the question of shared sacred sites.

Her lecture will be entitled "Navigating Topographies of Belonging and Difference: Contemporary Shared Sacred Sites in the Mediterranean."

Started in 1991, the annual Surjit Singh Lecture in Comparative Religious Thought and Culture builds upon the GTU's tradition of ecumenical theological education and dedication to interreligious dialogue and understanding. Each year, the endowed lectureship brings to the GTU a distinguished scholar to address religion and culture from a cross-cultural perspective. Learn more about past Singh Lecturers, or view past lectures [here](#).

Please register for this event on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-surjit-singh-lecture-by-dr-karen-barkey-tickets-136333803075>

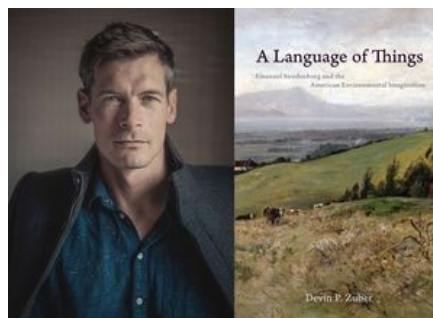


The Dean's Office Spring Lectures

Borsch-Rast Book Prize and Lectureship

Thursday, April 22nd, 5:00pm (PT) | Online

The Graduate Theological Union is pleased to announce that Dr. Devin Zuber, Associate Professor of American Studies, Religion, and Literature at the GTU, has been awarded the fourth annual Borsch-Rast Book Prize and Lectureship for his 2019 monograph, *A Language of Things: Swedenborg and the American Environmental Imagination* (University of Virginia Press).



Dr. Devin Zuber

In his award-winning book, Dr. Zuber examines the impact that Scandinavian scientist-turned-mystic Emanuel Swedenborg made on American culture, literature, and approaches to nature. By tracing the ways that Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Muir, and Sarah Orne Jewett, among others, responded to Swedenborg, Dr. Zuber illuminates the complex dynamic that came to unfold between the religious, the literary, and the ecological in nineteenth century culture. Her lecture will be entitled "Navigating Topographies of Belonging and Difference: Contemporary Shared Sacred Sites in the Mediterranean."

Dr. Zuber will be in conversation with Dr. Joan Richardson, Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, and Dr. Timothy Morton, Rita Shea Guffey Professor of English at Rice University.

Please register for this event on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-borsch-rast-lecture-tickets-135744969859>



GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION

STUDENT ELECTIONS

2021 SCHEDULE

Nominations will open on
February 15, 9 am

Deadline to submit nominations
March 12, 5 pm

Voting period
March 13 - 26

More details coming soon...

For any questions, please contact
cmotupalli@gtu.edu



The Dean's Newsletter

The Dean's Newsletter is for official notices from the Graduate Theological Union Dean's Office regarding academic affairs and for announcements of educational events focusing on academic research and thus of particular interest to faculty, MA students, and PhD students.

Send submissions by the second to last Friday of the month to

dmagallanes@gtu.edu

Diana Magallanes, Administrative Assistant to the Interim Dean

Graduate Theological Union Office of the Dean

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