

# GTU DEAN'S NEWSLETTER



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## Joy in the GTU

Last week was a thrilling week! On Tuesday evening, Sephora Markson and I had the pleasure of attending an event called “Why We Need to Build and Bridge,” hosted by the Greater Good Science Center (GGSC) at UC Berkeley. The event began with a talk by Eboo Patel, drawing on his latest book *We Need to Build*. As it says in the book description: “The goal of social change is not a more ferocious revolution, it is a more beautiful social order. ...We defeat the things we do not love by building the things we do.” After Patel’s talk, John A. Powell, the director of UC Berkeley’s Othering & Belonging Institute, offered a response. And a conversation followed, moderated by Allison Briscoe-Smith, a senior fellow at the GGSC and co-instructor for GGSC’s popular [Bridging Differences](#) course on BerkeleyX. The night inspired me to notice the many ways that the GTU bridges and builds toward a more just, compassionate, joyful, and loving world.

That feeling of inspiration was reaffirmed on Wednesday at the GTU interfaith conference on *Joy: Community, Inclusion, and Social Justice* featuring captivating talks by many of our GTU faculty, students, and guests. (Special thanks to Dr. Deidre Green for organizing this conference!) And again, on Friday at the Women’s Studies in Religion Student Conference and WSR Chair Lecture with Dr. Mahjabeen Dhala. Last week also featured the sacred celebrations event for Madrasa-Midrasha, a webinar co-sponsored by the Center for Jewish Studies and Harvard Divinity School on psychedelics and Judaism, and the regular Chaplaincy Hour hosted by GTU Interreligious Chaplaincy Program. That’s just five days in the life of the GTU.

As we anticipate celebrating commencement on May 11, I pray that we will be especially energized and encouraged by the bridging and building that is the ongoing work of the GTU by our faculty, staff, students, and alums. Patel closes his latest book with a chapter titled, “A Letter to My Sons, Future Builders of Diverse Democracy.” At the end, he writes: “Zayd and Khalil, we live in an age in which people speak of turning tools into weapons. But the deep wisdom of our religion and our country is to do the opposite.” Patel reminds his sons and us, the lesson taught by the wisest ones before us: “if you come as a pilgrim and you point to a place where everyone can thrive, people will recognize the strength of your generosity, and they will join you, and we will all win.”

Thank you, to all of you who point to places where everyone can thrive. Thank you for your strength and your generosity. Thank you for bridging and building. May you be encouraged in your work in the season ahead.

*Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Jennifer W. Davidson, PhD*

# Borsch-Rast Book Prize and Lectureship

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## **Deadline, May 19**

The Borsch-Rast Book Prize and Lectureship of the Graduate Theological Union has as its purpose the encouragement of the writing and publication of theological scholarship by GTU graduates and current faculty. The endowment for the Borsch-Rast Book Prize and Lectureship comes from the sale of Trinity Press International, a venture dedicated to the publication of scholarly and often interdisciplinary theological studies. The prize and lectureship honor the joint example and collaboration of Frederick Houk Borsch (1935-2017) and Harold W. Rast (1933-2004).

Hal Rast, after years as a senior editor at Fortress Press, was the founding director and editor of Trinity Press International, where he championed significant theological and religious studies. Fred Borsch was chair of Trinity Press International's Board of Governors and then its Advisory Board. Borsch was also (1972-1981) the Dean and President of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific and among the founders of the Graduate Theological Union Library. This prestigious prize of \$10,000 will be awarded on an annual basis.

Nominations must be submitted to the GTU Dean's Office using the [online nominations form](#).

**Nominations are open again, with a due date of May 19, 2023. This is for books published in 2022.**

For Eligibility Guidelines, Award Process and Timeline, Criteria for Prize, and Rules and Conditions, please visit [The Borsch-Rast Book Prize and Lectureship](#).

# Announcements



For more information visit [commencement.gtu.edu](https://commencement.gtu.edu)

# Member School Commencements

**Berkeley School of Theology**

*Saturday, May 20 | 2:00 pm (Pacific)*

First Church of Christ Scientist 2619 Dwight Way, Berkeley, CA 94720

**Church Divinity School of the Pacific**

*Saturday, May 20 | 10:30 am (Pacific)*

[For more information visit CDSP Commencement 2023](#)

**Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology**

*Saturday, May 20 | 1:00 pm (Pacific)*

[For more information visit DSPT Commencement 2023](#)

**San Francisco School of Theology, Graduate School of Theology, University of Redlands**

*Saturday, May 20 | 10:00 am (Pacific)*

Stewart Chapel 109 Seminary Rd, San Anselmo, CA 94960

**Institute of Buddhist Studies**

*Friday, May 19 | 10:00 am (Pacific)*

2140 Durant Ave Berkeley, CA 94704

**Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University**

*Saturday, May 20 | 3:00 pm (Pacific)*

[For more information visit JST Commencement 2023](#)

**Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary of California Lutheran University**

*Saturday, May 20 | 11:00 am (Pacific)*

2000 Center Street, Suite 200 Berkeley, CA 94704

**Pacific School of Religion**

*Sunday, May 21 | 4:00 pm (Pacific)*

[For more information visit PSR Commencement 2023](#)

# 2023 GTU Alum Reception



Monday, May 8  
5 - 6 PM PT

Join us online for this exclusive alum event as we celebrate this year's MA and PhD graduates. During this event we will hear remarks from the Rev. Dr. Marvin Lance Wiser (GTU PhD, Class of 2023), provide an update on Alum Relations at the GTU, and provide time to connect with your fellow alums. We look forward to seeing you!



[RSVP here](#)

## 2023-2024 Student Election Results

The GTU governance structure calls for student representation on various standing committees. This ensures that students have a say in decisions affecting their academic lives. After completing a month-long election process, I am happy to announce the results of this year's student elections. But first, I want to thank all those who participated in this process, especially the nominees: **Athena Lalita, Gilbert Otuo-Acheampong, Lenny Duncan, Mamisoa Rakotomalala, Marcia Gibson, Morey Lipsett, Wilson Ngema, Charissa Jaeger-Sanders, Justin Grosnick, Zeinab Vessal, Evan Underbrink, and Yanan Lu.** I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the student representatives who completed their term this year: **Charissa Jaeger-Sanders**, on the Doctoral Council; **Emily Pothast, Gideon Mbui, and Victoria Price** on the Student Advisory Committee; **Justin Grosnick** on the Library Committee; and **James Smith** as the AAR Liaison. Thank you for your committed service! Here are the results for this year:



**Mamisoa Rakotomalala**  
REPR  
Student Advisory Committee



**Marcia Gibson**  
REPR  
Student Advisory Committee



**Morey Lipsett**  
HCSR  
Student Advisory Committee



**Yanan Lu**  
THET  
Library Committee

*congrats!*



**Zeinab Vessal**  
HCSR  
AAR Liaison



**Evan Underbrink**  
THET  
Doctoral Council

Sincerely,  
Chaitanya Motupalli

**MAY PDP WORKSHOP**

Newhall Fellows' Luncheon  
with the 2022 Excellence in  
Teaching Awardee  
Dr. Devin Zuber

Wednesday, May 3 | 12:00 Noon to 1 PM  
GTU Dinner Board Room

PDP Workshops will resume in September 2023





**GTU STUDENTS**

*PLEASE JOIN US FOR AN*

**END OF SEMESTER  
CELEBRATION**

**MONDAY, MAY 8 AT 6PM**

In Person at the Dinner Board Room  
Online via Zoom  
Meeting ID: 933 3970 7986

Co-hosted by the Student Advisory Committee,  
The Black Student Caucus, and The African Students Group



GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION

## SUMMER LANGUAGE STUDY 2023

The GTU offers intensive summer language courses in French, German, Hebrew, and Spanish, designed to build a foundation for reading comprehension and translation. The courses focus on grammar, building vocabulary, and translation practice, and culminate in a modern foreign language exam, giving the students an opportunity to fulfill their program requirements (the Hebrew course counts as one course towards the two course requirement for GTU MA students).

Dates: **July 3 - July 28, 2023**Tuition: **\$ 750**

More information is coming soon. In the meantime, if you are interested in taking the summer courses, please email the Associate Dean of Students, Dr. Wendy Arce, at [warce@gtu.edu](mailto:warce@gtu.edu), with your name and the language course you are interested in taking.

# Academic Achievements & Deadlines

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## *Comprehensive Proposal Approved*

Joshua Rumbaoa Garcia, SATX

## *Advanced to Candidacy*

Rachelle Elizabeth, THET

## Modern Foreign Language Examination May 24, 2023

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Deadline to register is May 10, 2023

[Register here](#)

# Spring 2023 Student Awards

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## Borsch Rast Dissertation Award Winners

On behalf of the Core Doctoral Faculty Awards Committee, the Dean is pleased to announce two winners of the Borsch Rast Dissertation Award 2023:

**Hyung-Joo Lee** - Project titled: *Our Inflationary Big Bang Universe as Creation, as the Ground for Redemption, and as Characterized by Intra-Physics Emergence.*

**Reem Kosba** - Project titled: *Religion and Fashion in Contemporary Egypt: The Aesthetics and Politics of Dress.*

## Student Travel Grant Winners

The Dean is happy to announce grant recipients for this semester are:

**Jibreel Delgado**

**Reem Kosba**

*Congratulations to all!*



## Chan Essay

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### **Fall 2023: “Identity and Practice across Religious Boundaries: exploring a particular concept, theme, or practice in two or more religions.**

The Chan Essay Prize is an annual award of \$2500, established in 1987 by the Lionel Chan Family Endowment. To enter, submit an original essay, a term paper for a course, or a chapter of a thesis or dissertation, with an introduction and conclusion to frame it as an independent essay. The evaluating criteria are as follows:

**Genre:** Within the specific genre (essay, sermon, term paper, chapter of a larger work), does the entry exhibit excellence?

**Topic:** How well does the topic engage?

**Creativity/Contribution:** given the audience of the genre, how much of an original or creative contribution is made by the paper? Does it offer fresh insights or simply rehash materials already available?

The topic alternates from year to year. In even-numbered years (Fall 2024), the topic will be "Religion and Economics." In odd-numbered years (Fall 2023), the topic will be: "Identity and Practice across Religious Boundaries: exploring a particular concept, theme, or practice in two or more religions (e.g., Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, etc.)."

**Deadline:** Submissions are due in the GTU Dean's Office **no later than 5PM on THURSDAY, September 14, 2023**

Email submissions can be sent to: [skennedy@gtu.edu](mailto:skennedy@gtu.edu) (Sabrina Kennedy, Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs ) or complete the [Fall 2023 Chan Essay Prize Form](#).

## Student Travel Grants

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Student Travel Grants: GTU Doctoral students may apply for travel grants to national conferences. Applications are due by **September 15, 2023**.

**For more information, visit: [GTU Student Travel Grants](#)**

# Congratulations to the Class of 2023!

## Master of Arts Graduates

### **Huzaifah Bharucha**

*Contradictions between Āḥād Ḥadīth and Qiyās within the Ḥanafī Madhhab*

Center for Islamic Studies  
Munir Jiwa (Coordinator)  
Marianne Farina, C.S.C.

### **Julie Carpenter**

*Adi Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta and Environmentalism: A Transcendentalist Lens*

Center for Dharma Studies  
Rita D. Sherma (Coordinator)  
Devin Zuber

### **Jonathan Croes-Lanspeary**

*Don't Fear the Reaper: Familiarity with Interreligious Death Traditions Bolsters Resiliency and Facilitates Aid*

Graduate Theological Union  
WITH HONORS  
Arthur G. Holder (Coordinator)  
Rebecca Esterson

### **Michaela J. Eskew**

*Agony in the Garden: Vincent Van Gogh's Spiritual Vision of The Olive Grove at St. Rémy*

Graduate Theological Union  
Kathryn Barush (Coordinator) Anselm Ramelow, O.P.  
Anh Q. Tran, S.J.  
Frances Fowle, University of Edinburgh

# Master of Arts Graduates (cont'd)

## **Noel Magee Heyden**

*Towards a Comprehensive Solution to the Problem of Desire in the Bhagavad-Gītā: A Study of the Philological Evidence from the Sannanta, Vidhi Liṅ, Loṭ, and Kṛtya Verbal Forms and Kṛṣṇa's 'Beloved' Priya*

Center for Dharma Studies  
Rita Sherma (Coordinator) James Lawrence  
Graham M. Schweig, Christopher Newport University

## **George V. Hudgins, III**

*Blessed Be the Tie That Binds: Toward A Sonic Theology*

Graduate Theological Union  
Mary McGann, R.S.C.J. (Coordinator)  
Jennifer W. Davidson  
T. Carlis Roberts

## **Reem Javed**

*Beyond Khadijah and Aisha: Female Role Models and Islamic Education*

Graduate Theological Union  
Judith Berling (Coordinator)  
Boyoung Lee, Iliff School of Theology  
Nadeem Memon, University of South Australia

## **Austin J. Keith**

**Standing with Moral Injury: What It Is, What Has Been Done, and a Buddhist Prescription for Care**

Institute of Buddhist Studies  
Scott Mitchell (Coordinator)  
Daijaku Judith Kinst

# Master of Arts Graduates (cont'd)

## **Jaeseol Lee**

*A Theological Consideration of the Ecological Crisis: Focusing on Lynn White's Argument*

Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences  
Ted F. Peters (Coordinator)  
Kirsi Stjerna

## **Morris Alexander Lipsett**

*Come Out, Oh Bride: The Haggadic Element in the Rituals of a Queer Synagogue*

Center for Jewish Studies  
Sam S.B. Shonkoff (Coordinator) Deena Aranoff  
Naomi Seidman, University of Toronto

## **Elvira Bitran Miller**

*Pedagogy of Empathy: Healing Society with Middle School Students*

Center for Jewish Studies  
Deena Aranoff (Coordinator) Sam S.B. Shonkoff  
Cynthia Scheinberg, Rodger Williams University

## **Omar Naisan**

*Decrypting the Son of Man Problem: An Inquiry into the Dominant Approaches to the Son of Man Problem and its Conspicuous Application in Mark 8:27-31*

Pacific School of Religion  
Susan Abraham (Coordinator)  
Matthew J. Thomas  
James Nati

# Master of Arts Graduates (cont'd)

## **Todd Dennis Oswald**

*To Live and Die in Dixie: Theopolitics at the Four Corners of Law*

Graduate Theological Union

Lizette Larson-Miller (Coordinator)

Judith Berling

Charles Hirschkind, University of California, Berkeley

## **Laura J. Prickett**

*Outcomes of Spiritual Practices Documented in First-Person Accounts by Two Twentieth Century Author-Practitioners from Hindu and Christian Traditions*

Center for Dharma Studies

WITH HONORS

Rita D. Sherma (Coordinator)

James Lawrence

# Doctor of Philosophy Graduates

## **Mary A. Ashley**

*Toward a Catholic and Integral Ecology: Scotist and Animalist Conceptions of Moral Action in Dialogue*

Ethics and Social Theory

Lisa Fullam (Coordinator)

Mary Beth Ingham, C.S.J.

Kenneth Joel Shapiro, Animals and Society Institute

## **Sean David Allen Albrecht**

*A Broken Record: Trauma's Failure of Signification in the Structure and Formation of the Book of Jeremiah*

Sacred Texts and Their Interpretation

LeAnn Flesher (Coordinator)

Julián Andrés González-Holguín

Kent Puckett, University of California Berkeley

## **Phillbert John Cheng**

*Likeness and Unlikeness in Proclus Diadochus and Dionysius the Areopagite*

Theology and Ethics

Thomas Cattoi (Coordinator)

Matthew J. Thomas

Mark D. Delp, Zaytuna College



# Doctor of Philosophy Graduates (cont'd)

## **Robert David Coolidge**

*ʿAbd and Dāsa: A Muslim Understanding of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism*

Historical and Cultural Studies of Religion

Munir Jiwa (Coordinator)

Rita D. Sherma

Graham M. Schweig, Christopher Newport University

## **Hye Hyun Han**

*Somatic Spirituality for those Traumatized by Sexual Objectification in Korea: Art-Based Spiritual Practice as a Form of Contemplative Prayer*

Historical and Cultural Studies of Religion

Kirsi Stjerna (Coordinator)

Kathryn Barush

Min-Ah Cho, Georgetown University

## **Loretta Eleanore Johnson**

*Katherine Sonderegger: Undermining Feminist Trinitarian Theology in View of Trinitarian Monotheism*

Systematic and Philosophical Theology

Ted F. Peters (Coordinator)

Susan Abraham

Christopher M. Hadley, S.J.

Fred Sanders, Biola University

# Doctor of Philosophy Graduates (cont'd)

## **May T. Kosba**

*The Race Question: Egyptian Intellectualism on the Periphery of the African Diaspora*

Historical and Cultural Studies of Religion

Munir Jiwa (Coordinator)

Devin Phillip Zuber

Keith P. Feldman, University of California, Berkeley

Jovan Lewis, University of California, Berkeley

## **Jihoon Lee**

*The American YMCA and Moral Reform in Korea, 1903–1913: The Possibilities and Limits of Evangelical Moral Reform in Early Twentieth-Century Korea*

Historical and Cultural Studies of Religion

Randi J. Walker (Coordinator)

Joseph P. Chinnici, O.F.M.

Kenneth M. Wells, University of Canterbury

## **Raphael Dickson Mkuzi**

*Interreligious Peacebuilding through Promoting Economic Justice in the Context of Malawi, Africa*

Historical and Cultural Studies of Religion

Marianne Farina, C.S.C (Coordinator)

Munir Jiwa

Khalid Kadir, University of California Berkeley

# Doctor of Philosophy Graduates (cont'd)

## **Matata Mukengeshayi**

*Ancestor Worship in Today's Changing Japanese Family System*

Historical and Cultural Studies of Religion

James Lawrence (Coordinator)

Devin Phillip Zuber

Mark Blum, University of California, Berkeley

## **Laura Jean Torgerson**

*Crossing Contexts: Nicaraguan Pentecostal Biblical Interpretation in Church and Seminary*

Interdisciplinary Studies

Jean-François Racine (Coordinator)

Julián Andrés González Holguín

Laura Sterponi, University of California, Berkeley

## **Marvin Lance Wiser**

*Belonging to Work and Working to Belong: Dissimilation and Differentiation among Deportables Beyond the River*

Sacred Texts and Their Interpretation

Aaron J. Brody (Coordinator)

James Nati

Gregory L. Cuéllar, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

## **Olga Yunak**

*Theophanes the Greek as an Artist and a Theologian*

Interdisciplinary Studies

John Klentos (Coordinator)

Judith A. Berling

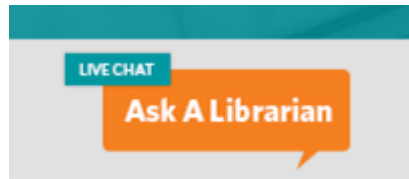
Rossitza B. Schroeder, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary

Kathleen Maxwell, Santa Clara University

# Library News

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## TRAVELING AND DOING RESEARCH THIS SUMMER?



Do you know that there are libraries in North America where you can do research and obtain check-out privileges through the [ATLA Reciprocal Borrowing Program](#)? GTU is a participating institutional member of this reciprocal borrowing program among the libraries through the American Theological Library Association (Atla). This means that you can walk into one of these participating libraries, show proof of your current enrollment at GTU and member schools, and check out materials based on its local lending policies. Here is the interactive [map](#) & [list](#) of these libraries.

The GTU library will be open throughout the summer. Reference librarians are available via live [chat](#) (Mon-Fri, 9am-4 pm Pacific), email ([library@gtu.edu](mailto:library@gtu.edu)), or one-on-one virtual appointment.

Have a great summer!

# Center for the Arts and Religion

## Art Forum

Thursday, May 4 | 7:30pm | Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology  
2301 Vine Street Berkeley, CA 94708



Poster Image: *Emerging in the Everyday*, Collage, Nathalia Bell, 2023

Join us for an Art Forum organized by student Nathalia Bell and co-sponsored by the GTU's Center for the Arts & Religion and the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology.

Student artists will present their creative practice accompanied by a brief talk relating to philosophy, theology, and aesthetics followed by a Q&A.

Artist talks by Justyn Michael Zolli (visual art), Nathalia Bell (moving image), Br. John Paul Puschautz (visual art), and Joshua Peck (literature).



Justyn Michael Zolli's visual art practice encompasses abstract painting, drawing, printmaking, murals, architectural art glass, and photography. He holds a BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston/Tufts University, and is currently studying Aesthetics at the Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology. He has completed many liturgical art commissions, and has exhibited his contemporary artwork in solo and group exhibitions in galleries and contemporary art fairs nationwide and internationally. Zolli's work endeavors to be an offering to others of an aesthetic experience of light, color, harmony, and peace. [justynzolli.com](http://justynzolli.com)



Nathalia Bell is a Canadian-German film artist and writer with an MA in Experimental Film from Kingston School of Art. Her film work has featured internationally in conferences, festivals, and venues including the British Film Institute and Imperial War Museum. Her poetic essay films create ruminative spaces that juxtapose the sublime and profane, exploring the theme of secular devotions, informed by her academic background in literature, philosophy, religion, and theology. [nathaliabell.com](http://nathaliabell.com)



Br. John Paul Puschautz, born into a family of artists, began to sell his paintings in high school while working at Gallery 37 in Downtown Chicago. He studied Painting and Art Education at the University of Illinois before entering the Community of St John in 2011. He is in the process of transferring his vows to the Western Province Dominicans and is currently finishing up his Masters in Divinity. He is interested in the healing of the imagination through meditating on the works of Blessed Fra Angelico. His drawings, paintings, and installations explore humanity's search for the transcendent in our complex experience.



Joshua Peck is a fiction writer and student of philosophy. He is thrice published for his short stories, in which he follows in the tradition of Flannery O'Conner and Walker Percy. He is currently a philosophy masters student at Dominican School Philosophy & Theology, the showrunner for an audio drama to be released 2024, and working on a novel to be completed the same year.

## Madrasa-Midrasha Program

### **The Madrasa-Midrasha program is delighted to announce the recipients of the 2023 Haas Student Summer Research Grant. Congratulations to:**

Carey Averbook: “Menstruation as Holy for Women and Queer Life: Judaism and Islam in Conversation.”

Jibreel Delgado: “Jewish and Muslim Legal Texts and Liberation in and out of the Imperial Metropole.”

Katy Dickinson: “The Same and Different: Supporting Muslim and Jewish Inmates.”

Omar Naisan: “The Anointed One: A Comparative Textual Inquiry of Messianism in the Hebrew Bible and Qur’an.”

Amy Shoemaker: “The Tales We Tell: What Islamic and Jewish Stories Reveal about Our Religions and Ourselves.”

Zeinab Vessal and Morey Lipsett: “Khamsa and Hamsa: An Inter-Religious Object in Islamic and Jewish Societies.”

## Madrasa-Midrasha Summer Institute 2023

We are also excited about the student-centered Madrasa-Midrasha Summer Institute 2023. The Jewish studies component will feature the first ever modern Hebrew language intensive at the GTU as a joint effort with the Richard S. Dinner Center for Jewish Studies. The course will meet July 3rd through July 28th. The course will focus on the interreligious and interlinguistic framework so critical for language study and will be taught at the intermediate level, and participants must be able to read Hebrew and work their way through a basic Hebrew text. GTU degree program students and Continuing Education students are invited to register. For more questions, please contact Dr. Aranoff ([baranoff@gtu.edu](mailto:baranoff@gtu.edu)) and [read the announcement here](#).

The Islamic studies component will support a limited-term student position for Islamic Manuscripts Research as a joint effort with the GTU’s Flora Lamson Hewlett Library. The role will produce a descriptive analysis of the Father John Capistran Boreley Islamic Manuscript collection, including identifying title/author/scribe/date information, recording features of the manuscript, confirmation of significant assertions, and other features if/when possible. For more questions, please contact Colyn Wohlmut at [cwohlmut@gtu.edu](mailto:cwohlmut@gtu.edu).

The Jewish and Islamic components of this summer program will advance academic student resources at the GTU.

Finally, we wish the GTU students, faculty, and staff a fruitful end of the semester and a rejuvenating summer!

## Center for Islamic Studies

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Our deep gratitude to Nosizwe Breaux-Abdur-Rahman, GTU doctoral student and Newhall fellow, for her leadership and participation in the Race, Religion and Belonging working group at the Berkeley Center for the Study of Religion throughout this academic year, and also for her service as the HCSR department representative to the GTU Student Advisory Committee.



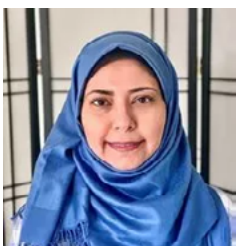
Our deep gratitude to Sundiata Al Rashid, Amir of Lighthouse Mosque and GTU PhD student, for his extraordinary leadership in bridging academia with the larger public, and for leading the Eid al-Fitr Unity Eid Celebration on April 21, San Pablo Park, Berkeley.



Congratulations to Reem Kosba, GTU PhD candidate and Presidential Scholar, who was awarded the Borsch Rast Dissertation Award 2023 in support of her dissertation project tentatively titled: Religion and Fashion in Contemporary Egypt: The Aesthetics and Politics of Dress. Amazing work, Reem!



Congratulations to Jibreel Delgado, GTU doctoral student and current CARE research scholar, for being selected as a 2023-2024 Hispanic Theological Initiative (HTI) scholar at Princeton Theological Seminary. Congratulations also for his upcoming participation in the Center of Study and Investigation for Decolonial Dialogues Summer Program, Critical Muslim Studies: Decolonial Struggles and Liberation Theologies, Granada Spain, June 2023, and at the 'Decolonizing Knowledge and Power: Postcolonial Studies, Decolonial Horizons' program in Barcelona in July.

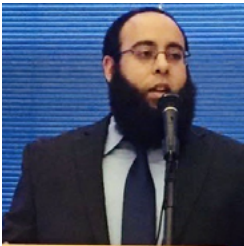


Congratulations to Dr. Mahjabeen Dhala, Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies and Director of the Madrasa-Midrasha Program, for her contribution to ING series on Muslim Women's Rights and Challenges in History and Today." Congratulations also on her presentation "Interreligious Pedagogies at the GTU" during the Powering Pluralism Summit in Virginia, June 21-23, and for her participation in the Wabash cohort for early faculty, Indianapolis, June 26-June 30.





CIS gratefully acknowledges Carol Bier, CIS/GTU Research Scholar, for her scholarship and public events advancing dialogues and understanding, and for the following presentations: "Patternmaking and Weaving Technologies across the Silk Roads" for the Substantial Motion Research Network (SFU, Vancouver) April 30 via Zoom, and "'Making Geometry Manifest' in Islamic Art and Architecture," Fuat Sezgin Symposium on the History of Science in Islam, Istanbul, Türkiye, May 25-27.



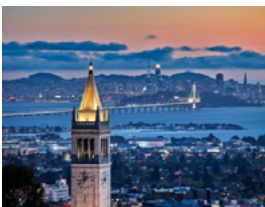
CIS gratefully acknowledges Dr. Ahmed Khater, CIS/GTU scholar, for offering a series of public engagement classes and lectures at UC Berkeley and at Berkeley Law School this spring 2023, and throughout this summer, cosponsored by the CIS. For more information, please visit: [CIS](#)



CIS gratefully acknowledges Dr. Eby Shabudin, CIS/GTU visiting scholar, for offering a public engagement course on Values Based Leadership, and for his ongoing leadership and mentorship bridging diverse communities, cultures and faiths.



CIS Director, Dr. Munir Jiwa, has been invited by the Henry Luce Foundation, the Fetzer Institute, and Institute for Diversity & Civic Life, to join a retreat as part of the convening of the Luce Covid-19 Grant Network, Fetzer Institute, Michigan, June 1-3. Dr. Jiwa has also been invited to the Asian Pacific American Religions Research Initiative plenary at the APARRI conference at UC Berkeley, June 20-22, where five leading scholars will present on “envisioning radical futures in APA religions and communities.”



The CIS is delighted to cosponsor the International Islamophobia Studies Research Association annual conference. This year’s theme is “Islamophobia and Knowledge Production.” UC Berkeley, May 5-7, 2023. For more information: <https://irdprojectblog.wordpress.com>



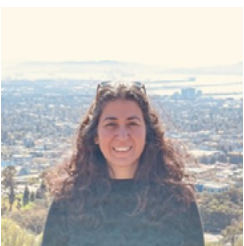
Congratulations and our deep gratitude to CIS students, alums, visiting and research scholars, faculty, staff, and supporters for their excellent work and achievements especially as CIS celebrates 15 years! Congratulations to all our amazing graduates in Islamic Studies over the years.



Huzaifah Bharucha, MA thesis title, “Contradictions between Āhād Hadīth and Qiyās within the Hanafī Madhhab,” will begin the PhD program in fall 2023, in the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures at UC Berkeley. Congratulations!



Dr. David Coolidge, PhD dissertation title, “Abd and Dāsa: A Muslim Understanding of Caitanya Vaisnavism.” Awarded the 2022 Best Dissertation Proposal Award. Congratulations!



Dr. May Kosba, PhD dissertation title, The Race Question: Egyptian Intellectualism on the Periphery of the African Diaspora. Currently Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Program in African Studies at Princeton University. Congratulations!

## Women's Studies in Religion



### Congrats to WSR Certificate Recipients!

This year the Women's Studies in Religion Certificate was awarded to:

Yanan Lu, Ph.D., Theology and Ethics, GTU

Diane Saunders, Ph.D., Historical and Cultural Studies, Art & Religion, GTU

The WSR Certificate Program is for enrolled GTU students who wish to integrate an intentional focus on women's studies in inter-religious dialogue, theology and religion, and encourages the innovative work of wo/men faculty and students at both the GTU and UC Berkeley. Completion of the certificate requires the Women's Studies in Religion seminar offered every year, completing three additional courses (at least two with a religious or theological component) at the GTU or UC Berkeley, and participate in designated Women's Studies in Religion events.

### WSR Faculty Chair Lecture

with Dr. Mahjabeen Dhala "Servant Leadership - Honoring Labor of Love" was given at the WSR Student Conference on Women and Religion. The video of the lecture will be available on the WSR website pages soon.

### The WSR Student Conference on Women in Religion!

Watch for the Recording on our Website of the Presenters!  
Gratitudes to the Student Presenters, Faculty Presiders and Organizing Team for the great success of the WSR Student Conference on Women in Religion. We had 13 Students Presenting Papers and over 60 attendees! It was a wonderful and enlightening day for all.

### Gratitudes go out to the WSR Advisory Board!

Thank-you to all the Faculty Advisors, Staff and Students who served on the WSR Steering Committee this year. It was a wonderful year of growth and development. Marked especially in being able to bring back in person the two long time annual GTU programs, The Mentoring Event and The WSR Graduate Student Conference on Religion. You can now discover the inspirational history of these programs on the [WSR Website Home Page](#).

# San Francisco Theological Seminary

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## San Francisco Theological Seminary COMMENCEMENT

Saturday, May 20, 2023  
10:00 a.m.  
Stewart Chapel

### **Baccalaureate**

Friday, May 19, 2023  
4:00 p.m.  
Montgomery Chapel

Graduate School of Theology  
University of Redlands, Marin Campus  
105 Seminary Road, San Anselmo, California



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

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### **Lavender Lunch: For Us, By Us: HIV Prevention Organizing in Communities of Color**

**Tuesday, May 9 | 12:30 - 1:00 pm (Pacific)**

Kamal Fizazi (they/he) is a consultant, organizer and activist who strives to advance and promote dignity, liberation, human rights, healing, justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging for all. Kamal's passion and drive for collective liberation, justice and equity spring from and are nourished by their faith, Maliki Sunni Islam. Kamal serves as Board Chair of UHAI EASHRI USA, Inc., and on the Board of the US HIV/AIDS Faith Coalition as well as the Faith in Harm Reduction Coalition. Professionally Kamal offers strategic consulting and partnership development to social impact businesses and nonprofits.

[Event Details](#)

### **Queering Shavuot with Rabbi Denise Eger**

**Thursday, May 11 | 1:00 - 2:00 pm (Pacific)**

The Jewish holy day of Shavuot – beginning May 24th this year – raises profound issues of how queer people understand Scripture. As we empower ourselves as Torah interpreters, and center our own experiences and visions, the Torah becomes a living revelation rather than a relic of a past time and place. Join the brilliant and thought provoking LGBTQ pioneer Rabbi Denise Eger as she presents guidance and insights in Queering Shavuot.

[Event Details](#)

### **Queer & Latinx Faith Conversation: A Deacon's Life of Service**

**Thursday, May 18 | 1:00 - 2:00 pm (Pacific)**

In this faith conversation Rev. Deacon Pedro Rodriguez, Jr.—social worker in NYC--shares his experiences of providing access to medical care to people with HIV/AIDS and advocating for the health and wellness of people in Latinx and LGBTQI communities.

[Event Details](#)



**Tuesday, May 23 | 12:00 - 4:00 pm (Pacific)**

Join the AAPIRT as we celebrate the release of its 2nd Zine Edition, Sublime Divinations, which invited 5 LGBTQ+ AAPI community members to explore and share their own unique methods and practices of sacred divination. This particular zine understands divination as “how one makes sacred meaning out of the world around them and within them”.

[Event Details](#)

### **Healthcare Chaplaincy and the Transgender Community**

**Wednesday, May 31 | 12:00 - 1:00 pm (Pacific)**

Join us for this interactive webinar for chaplains, CPE students, and anyone with an interest in providing quality care to transgender and nonbinary people in healthcare settings. We will explore the added stressors that trans people face in healthcare settings, and how the chaplain encounter can be transformative for trans patients and the care teams providing treatment.

[Event Details](#)



## 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 and MA and PhD students.

Send submissions by the second-to-last Friday of the month to [skennedy@gtu.edu](mailto:skennedy@gtu.edu)  
Sabrina Kennedy, Executive Assistant to the Dean

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Graduate Theological Union Office of the Dean

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