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# DEAN'S NEWSLETTER

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Since April is poetry month, it seems fitting for this newsletter to begin with the first verse of T.S. Eliot's poem, *The Waste Land*:

**April is the cruellest month, breeding  
 Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
 Memory and desire, stirring  
 Dull roots with spring rain.**

While Eliot's April sounds more like the February in the Bay Area, the theme of memory and desire is fitting. As we begin to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic we reminisce about our lives in the "before times," and we proclaim that we want to get back to "normal."

That's what makes this "the cruellest month." As much as we want to move forward, the past tugs us back.

First, In the United States alone, we mourn over 548,000 COVID-19 deaths so far. This astonishing figure defies comprehension. None of us are untouched. Our world is different now.

Second, we remain uncertain about ongoing health concerns. "Long COVID," new variants, anti-vaxxers; how can we be sure that we are safe, and our families and communities are protected? How can we overcome the psychological effects of a pandemic year on ourselves and our children?

Third, in the U.S., "normal" includes deeply embedded structural racism and rampant gun violence. At the beginning of the pandemic, the police murder of George Floyd brought this to our collective attention; more recently, we've seen two mass murders so close in succession that we barely had time to focus on the killing of eight in Atlanta (mostly Asian women, a reminder of the endemic racism and violence that our AAPI community faces) when we had to face the murder of ten in Boulder.

Despite what Eliot says, we can't expect the Spring rain to breed lilacs out of the dead land and to stir our dull roots. That's our job. The GTU mission statement emphasizes study and service, social and environmental justice, and diversity of religions and cultures. We are well positioned to BE the Spring rain, ourselves.

*Elizabeth S. Peña*

Elizabeth S. Peña, PhD

Interim Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs

## Academic Accomplishments

### *MA Successfully Defended*

Katy Dickinson, THET\*  
Felicia Good, REPR, Honors  
Katie Kilby, THET, Honors  
Thomas Ethan Lowery, CDSP, Honors  
Benjamin Woollard, PAOI

*\*Katy Dickinson's name was misspelled in our February newsletter. We apologize for this error.*

### *Comprehensive Proposal Approved*

Junsik Chang, THET



### *Oral Comprehensive Proposal Approved*

Sewon Jang, REPR  
Paula Thompson, HCSR, Distinction\*

*\*Paula Thompson was listed incorrectly as completing her dissertation with distinction in February's newsletter. We congratulate Paula for the successful completion of her comprehensive exams with distinction. Please note that distinction is only an option for successful passing of comprehensive exams.*

### *Advanced to Candidacy*

Lai Shan Yip, IDS (March 2021)  
Hanna Kang, REPR (February 2021)  
Pace Warfield, THET (February 2021)  
Laurent Okitakatshi Odjango, SATX (December 2020)  
May T. Kosba, HCSR (December 2020)  
Matata Mukengeshayi, HCSR (November 2020)  
Christina Atienza, HCSR (November 2020)  
Clifton Huffmaster, HCSR (November 2020)  
Loretta Johnson, THEO (November 2020)  
Stefan Waligur, HCSR (October 2020)  
Gordon Gilmore, THET (October 2020)  
Pamela Stevens, HCSR (September 2020)  
William Zangeneh-Lester, IDS (May 2020)  
Bright Singh David, THEO (May 2020)  
Scott Spitzer, HIST (May 2020)  
Marvin Wisner, BIBL (May 2020)  
Ramakrishnan Parameshwaran, THET (May 2020)  
Laura Dunn, HCSR (May 2020)  
Philbert Cheng, THET (April 2020)  
Ismael Ruiz, THET (February 2020)



### *Dissertation Successfully Defended*

Thomas Calobrisi, HCSR  
Beena Kallely, THET  
Ki Wook Min, THEO  
Jaesung Ryu, THET

## 2021-2022 Student Election Results

The GTU governance structure calls for student representation on various important 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 for this year's student elections. But first, let me thank all those who have participated in this process, especially the nominees: **Charissa Jaeger-Sanders, Porsia Tunzi, Emily Pothast, Gideon Mbui, Joshua Garcia, Victoria Price, Jennifer Lehmann, and James Smith.** I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the student representatives that have completed their term this year: **Christina Atienza, OP,** on the Doctoral Council, **Carmelo Sorita, Hanna Kang,** and **Jennifer Lehmann** on the Student Advisory Committee, **Mariska Lauterboom** on the Library Committee, and **Sheryl Johnson** as the AAR Liaison. Thank you for your committed service! Now, here are the results for this year:



**Joshua Garcia**  
 SATX  
 Student Advisory  
 Committee



**Gideon Mbui**  
 THET  
 Student Advisory  
 Committee



**Victoria Price**  
 HCSR  
 Student Advisory  
 Committee



**Charissa Jaeger-Sanders**  
 THET  
 Doctoral Council

*congrats!*



**James Smith**  
 REPR  
 AAR Liaison



**Jennifer Lehmann**  
 SATX  
 Library Committee

Sincerely,  
 Chaitanya Motupalli

## GTU Commencement



*\*This photo was from our microsite for the Class of 2020*

### GTU Commencement Update

By: Wendy Arce

Associate Dean of Students



The GTU Commencement occurs once a year, usually on the second Thursday in May, and is open to the public. The event abounds with academic regalia, music, admittedly, a few speeches, and time to introduce each graduate to the community where the graduate receives a diploma and is invested in the hood of their degree.

Sadly, however, this year as well, due to the pandemic-related guidelines and restrictions, we will not conduct the GTU Commencement Exercises in person. Instead, we will celebrate the accomplishments of the graduating class on the GTU 2021 Commencement microsite, and we will host viewing parties for our graduates and their faculty mentors, friends, and family!

We hope that the microsite will allow us to give glimpses into the amazing diversity of the GTU academic community and also the splendid work done by the graduates. A Graduation Program will be created and distributed electronically. At a later point in time, a printed copy of the program will be mailed to the graduates.

We are grateful for your continued support and understanding.

Please visit <https://2020commencement.gtu.edu/> to see last year's graduates!

CLASS  
of  
2021

## Announcements

### Borsch-Rast Book Prize and Lectureship

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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 close the final Wednesday of April.**

For Eligibility Guidelines, Award Process and Timeline, Criteria for Prize, and Rules and Conditions, please visit [Borsch-Rast Book Prize and Lectureship | Graduate Theological Union \(gtu.edu\)](#).



### Coffee Hour with the Dean

Every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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: 543 910 5370

## Announcements

### GTU's 46th Distinguished Faculty Lecturer

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We are pleased to announce that Dr. Valerie Miles-Tribble has been named the GTU's 46th Distinguished Faculty Lecturer!

Dr. Miles-Tribble is the Associate Professor of Ministerial Leadership and Practical Theology at Berkeley School of Theology (BST) and is also a member of the Core Doctoral Faculty. Dr. Miles-Tribble is also the Chair of the Women's Studies in Religion Steering Committee.

To learn about her recent book, *Change Agent Church in Black Lives Matter Times: Urgency for Action*, please visit <https://youtu.be/KgpdTRL-hds>.

Stay tuned for her Fall 2021 lecture. Until then, Congratulations to Dr. Miles-Tribble!!



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## Teaching Theology & Religion—Call for Journal Contributions

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As the co-editors ready the first issue of this year, they encourage all members of the wider GTU network to contribute to the journal—full articles (4000 to 7000 words), In the Classroom essays about concrete teaching practices (up to 3000 words), Teaching Tactics on a specific repeatable practice (400 words), or reviews. Submissions are made through the online portal: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ttr> (which includes style and formatting information).

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## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

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The DEI Committee, in partnership with LaMikia Castillo, Lead Consultant from Jennifer Brown Consulting (JBC), synthesized data and feedback from the survey and focus groups, which will be shared with the larger community at a dedicated “Board—DEI Report Out and Feedback” on the following dates:

**Thursday, April 8 | 3:00-4:30pm**  
**Friday, April 9 | 10:00-11:30am**

Further details are available on the GTU's Event Calendar located [here](#)

To request Zoom access for one of the dates listed above, please reach out to Melissa Haddick at [mhaddick@gtu.edu](mailto:mhaddick@gtu.edu).



**How long have you been at the GTU?**

I joined the GTU in 2015 as an MA student and continued as a Presidential scholar in the Doctoral program at the GTU's department of Sacred Texts and their Interpretation. I am excited to be amongst the class of 2021 graduates! I started my faculty position at the GTU in January 2021 as an Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies and Director of the Madrasa-Midrasha program.

**What are your impressions so far?**

I admire the GTU for demonstrating a thriving model of hybridity between theological as well as academic scholarship with a focus on interdisciplinary methods in an interreligious environment. It gives me the cutting edge of being able to engage with students who bring their academic critical thought and their confessional ethics to class discussions. At the CIS, we engage with classical Islamic texts as well as critical race theory, Islamophobia research, and raise questions around the disproportionate impact of global and local crises on minorities of class, race, and gender from the perspective of religious ethics, moral mandate, and national accountability. Could not have asked for a better place to work on women and gender in pre-modern and contemporary Islamic thought!

**What do you do besides teaching at the GTU?**

Like most of the fascinating GTU community, I wear many hats! I am a religious leader serving many Islamic Centers in the Bay area and around the world. I also lead pilgrimages to major Muslim spiritual sites globally. My community work includes meeting with women and youth to listen to their concerns, offer support and resources, and strategize ways of initiating change for the better. My daughter leads the SF Bay area chapter of an international non-profit-organization called Whoishussain. Whenever I can, I volunteer to raise funds for their public events.



**What do you do when you are not working?**

I love the outdoors! Driving, hiking, and an afternoon at the beach helps me rejuvenate. Binge-watching Netflix comes next. Although I am not a great cook, I like to try out my culinary explorations from time to time, with the assurance that that my brothers and/or my daughters will save the day!

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***Congratulations to Dr. Dhala for her excellent virtual talk entitled “The Sermon of Fatima: Women’s Theology, Leadership, and Social Justice”, which was held on March 31, 2021.***

# Meet an Affiliate

## Wilmette Institute

Q&A with  
**Robert Stockman, ThD**  
**Wilmette Institute Director**



### **What's the history of Wilmette Institute?**

The Wilmette Institute began in 1995 as an effort to provide systematic courses on aspects of the Baha'i Faith to anyone who wanted them. In that year the Faith, which was started in the mid nineteenth century in Iran, was a century and a half old, and had just celebrated its centenary in the United States. The Baha'i Faith has no clergy; instead, it stresses the importance of universal education. It has no seminaries, but has a long history of producing educational literature and organizing classes and courses. The Wilmette Institute sought to offer courses and classes at a college level, which was new to the Baha'is. During our first year, we held a one-month intensive at National Louis University in Evanston, Illinois, a ten-minute walk from the Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette, and anyone who wanted credit could pay an extra fee to National Louis for it. With the advent of the internet, we switched from face-to-face courses to online courses starting in 1998, because the Baha'is are widely scattered across the country and that mode of delivery reached more people. We have had a steady trickle of people who wanted either undergraduate or graduate credit, and sometimes colleges would accept our courses for credit, even though we are not accredited. Now we are seeking accreditation in order to offer graduate-level certificates on topics related to the Baha'i Faith.

### **How long has Wilmette Institute been a GTU affiliate?**

The Wilmette Institute joined GTU in January of this year.

### **Why is this relationship important?**

We are delighted to be part of the GTU family. Participation in GTU anchors our courses to a recognized, highly respected institution of higher education. It provides us the opportunity to learn about offering courses at the graduate level, allows our students to study in the same courses as GTU students, and allows GTU students to take our courses and see what ideas and insights we offer on such subjects as the spiritual life, theology, and above all, on social transformation and establishment of justice in the world. It also allows our certificate students to apply to a master's degree or doctoral program at GTU, where our courses will be available. Since students at University of California Berkeley can take GTU courses, it also means we have the opportunity to learn about reaching undergraduates and students in more secular graduate programs. Finally, it gives us a place where we can contribute actively to dialogue about interfaith subjects and pressing social issues.

### **What are some of the exciting efforts the Wilmette Institute is planning?**

Currently, the Institute is working on accreditation and exploring ways to provide Baha'i concentrations that will fit within GTU's masters degree programs. It is collecting books to donate to the library and is planning an annual lectureship, once face to face events are possible. It is expanding its program of semi-monthly webinars on academic topics and is exploring plans to establish a publishing program. It is also working with Baha'i campus associations across the country to provide them with academic lectures and undergraduate courses on Baha'i topics.



## From the Library

### Zotero Workshop

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Tuesday, April 6, 2021 | 4:00pm - 5:00pm | Online

Learn to use this free citation management software to organize your research. It integrates with Microsoft Office to create an alphabetized bibliography in your choice of style, including Turabian. Held online via Zoom—Zoom meeting ID 510 649 2501 No RSVP required, join anytime. Questions? Send an email to [Stephanie](#), the branch librarian.

Pre-assignment: [download Zotero 5.0 & the browser connector](#).

For more information, please visit: <https://www.gtu.edu/events/zotero-workshop-29>

Can't make it? Watch our [recorded workshop](#).

### Expanded In-Library Study Appointments

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We've expanded the in-library study appointment times. GTU students, staff, and faculty, can now reserve a table for a three-hour time slot up to twenty-four hours per week. You can bring your own computer for a quiet writing time, or request books be pulled and waiting on your table for you to browse. <https://www.gtu.edu/library/get-help/library-reservations>

### Curbside Pickup

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The number of curbside pickup appointments have increased, with more time slots available. It's easy: first place your books on hold in the library catalog, then when you are notified that the books are available, make an appointment and come by the library for a fast, contactless pickup. <https://www.gtu.edu/curbside>

Need a book chapter or article that is on the shelf? No need to come by, we can scan it and email it to you. <https://www.gtu.edu/library/get-help/library-scanning-services>. Or maybe you want something the library doesn't own? We can borrow it from another library using Interlibrary Loan (ILL) <https://www.gtu.edu/library/get-help/interlibrary-loan> or you can suggest we purchase it for our collection <https://www.gtu.edu/library> and click on Suggest a Purchase.

If you have questions about finding and using the library, just ask a librarian. We have librarians on chat from 9am-4 pm (pacific time) on weekdays. The button to connect to chat is on the library webpages, in your Moodle classes, and in the library tutorials and guides. Please visit: <https://www.gtu.edu/library>





## Center for the Arts & Religion

### April Art Window

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While the Doug Adams Gallery is out of use, we are using our beautiful ground floor window (2465 LeConte Ave. Berkeley) to highlight some of the Bay Area's talented artists of color!

April's artist is Ahn Lee, a nonbinary, queer Cantonese artist and researcher from Los Angeles. Their interdisciplinary practice of ceramics, media and performance relies on a combined methodology of autobiographical re-making and research on the Cantonese diaspora. Of Sunwui (Xinhui) descent, Ahn explores their ancestral roots to this contested site of capitalism and imperialism through leveraging archival research historiography, and critical race and gender theory. Previously, Ahn studied at UCLA as a Eugene V. Cota Robles Graduate Fellow. They are currently pursuing their Master of Fine Arts degree at UC Berkeley.

Anh's display will feature translucent, 3mm-thick, porcelain PPE masks, glazed with a handmade, original Jun-inspired glaze made to look like a cloudy sky. Using the symbol of a mask, perhaps the most ubiquitous emblem to come out of the COVID pandemic, Ahn's body of work not only reflects on the current pandemic, but also on migration, diaspora and the 1800's concept of "yellow peril".



*A Patch of Sky*, Anh Lee (2020), glazed porcelain

## Center for the Arts & Religion

### CARe April Workshop

This semester, CARe is continuing 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.*

#### **Musical Messiahs and Rituals of Memorialization**

**Saturday, April 10 and Saturday, April 17 | 1:00 - 3:00 pm (PDT)**

Instructed by Dr. Richard Lindsay

What is it about late musicians that brings about rituals of memorialization, collections of holy writings and relics, even claims of resurrection and reincarnation? Examining how popular figures in music become elevated to the status of “musical messiahs” can inform us about the process of canonization of holy figures in our religious traditions. And it can help us examine the role of the memorial in our own piety and ritual.

This workshop will examine the “cults” surrounding musical martyrs of the past 50 years, including John Lennon, Selena, Tupac Shakur, Kurt Cobain, and Amy Winehouse. Students may apply lessons learned from these case studies to whatever musicians and genres fit their interest. One of the class assignments will be the creation of a “shrine” to a musician of the student’s choice.

Learn more and sign up: [gtu.edu/careworkshops](http://gtu.edu/careworkshops)



### **Musical Messiahs and Rituals of Memorialization**

*Dr. Richard Lindsay*

**Sat. April 10 & Sat. April 17 | 1-3pm PDT**

## Center for the Arts & Religion

### CARe Events

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#### Poetry at the Edge of Belief

Tuesday, April 20 | 4:00 - 5:00 pm (PDT) | Online (Free)

Celebrate National Poetry Month with CARe!

“I find out everything I believe through writing,” the poet Alice Notley said.

For National Poetry Month, join poet-pastors Elizabeth Robinson and Nate Klug for a reading and discussion at the intersection of poetry and belief. They’ll share some work by poets they admire and talk about how poetic innovation might foster spiritual discovery, and vice versa.

Elizabeth Robinson is the pastor of Orinda Community Church (UCC), and the author of sixteen books, most recently *Rumor* from Free Verse Editions/Parlor Press. She has been the winner of the National Poetry Series for *Pure Descent* (Sun & Moon), and the Fence Modern Poets Prize for *Apprehend*. Robinson’s mixed genre meditation, *On Ghosts*, was a finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award in Poetry.

Nate Klug is the pastor of Arlington Community Church (UCC), and the author of *Hosts and Guests* (Princeton Series of Contemporary Poets, 2020).

[Register for this free, online event!](#)

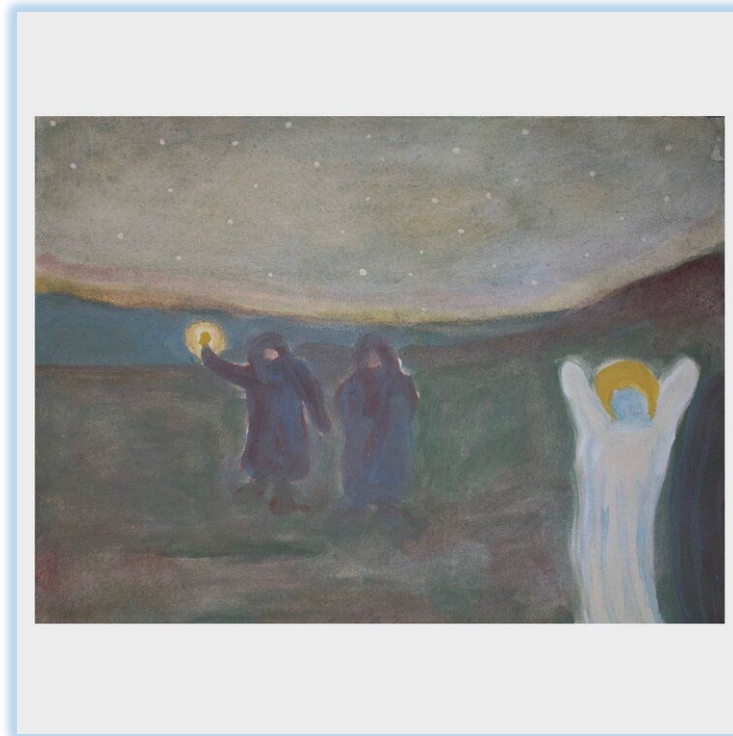


Image credit: *He Ain't Here*, Stephen Evans, 2018

## Center for the Arts & Religion

### CARe Events

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#### Embodied Stories: Earth Day Celebration

Thursday, April 22 | 12:45 - 1:45 pm (PDT)

To celebrate Earth Day, CARe is partnering with the GTU's [Women's Studies in Religion](#) and the newly created [Center for Climate Justice and Faith](#) at the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary to talk about climate justice and gender justice through the lens of the arts.

Please join us on Zoom, where local dancer **KJ Dahlaw** will offer a reflection on their practice and lead us in gentle movement of our own. KJ Dahlaw is a Bay Area dance artist and makes work under the name of [Unruly Body Tanztheater](#). They hold an MFA in Dance from Saint Mary's College of CA and a BFA in Dance Performance from Northern Illinois University. KJ's work examines unruliness; queer theology; the body; and practices of counter-hegemony in the dancing body. KJ is exploring the lineage of tanztheater and has a background in ballet, modern dance, and improvisational practices.

No dance experience necessary! This event is open to all, regardless of gender identity or expression.

[Register for this free, online event!](#)



#### Missed any of last month's events?

Don't worry! You can catch the recordings of March's events, and recordings of lots of other past CARe events on the GTU's YouTube Channel: [youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZdqyX\\_832itT7aHgBTwQJReZvHj2NYPK](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZdqyX_832itT7aHgBTwQJReZvHj2NYPK)

## Center for Dharma Studies

### CDS Accomplishments

Dr. Rita D. Sherma offered the Plenary Address at this year's American Academy of Religion, Western Region (AARWR) Annual Conference hosted by the GTU.



Dr. Sherma's talk was titled *"Love Never Fails": The Power of Nonviolence in a Time of Planetary Neglect & Negligence* and touched upon the interconnected network of oppressions that lead to the major crises we face as a planetary community. The focus of the lecture was on an invitation to a wide and transcultural understanding of the dharmic concept of Ahimsa (often inadequately translated as "non-violence") as a hermeneutical vehicle to navigate the turbulent waters of human oppression and ecosystemic extinction.



Congratulations to **Dr. Pravina Rodrigues**, of the inaugural 2016 PhD cohort affiliated with the Shingal Center for Dharma Studies, for the successful culmination of her doctoral work. She now holds a PhD in Theology & Ethics | Comparative Theology, from the GTU.

The title of Dr. Rodrigues' dissertation is *Upside Down, Inside Out: Śākta Mnemopraxial Methodology for Comparative Theology*.

Many thanks to Dr. Gabriella Lettini, Dissertation Committee Coordinator for her immense support.

Dr. Rodrigues is Associate Editor of *Religions & Sustainability: Interreligious, Interdisciplinary Responses*, a 35-chapter volume co-edited by Rita D. Sherma & P. Bilimoria (Springer, 2021).

## Center for Dharma Studies

### CDS Accomplishments

Congratulations to **Laura Dunn**, PhD candidate, Historical & Cultural Studies of Religion, CDS inaugural cohort, on receiving the Editorial Newhall Fellowship.

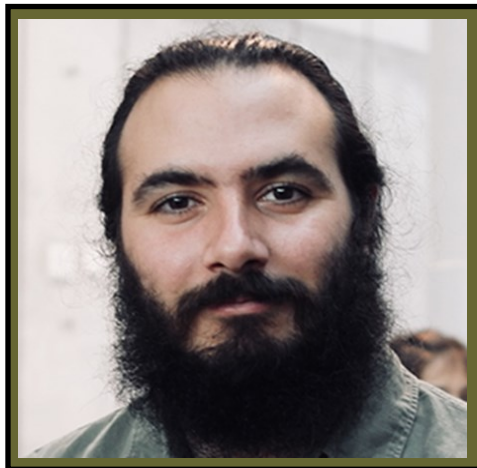
Laura’s stellar work on the CDS flagship publication, the *Journal of Dharma Studies*, has been instrumental in raising the profile of multidisciplinary, multivocal, transnational Dharma Studies.

The mission of the *Journal of Dharma Studies: Philosophy, Theology, Ethics, and Culture* is to employ theoretical and empirical methodologies for the intersubjective understanding of, and real-world applications of the conceptual resources, textual sources, and experiential practices to foster critical-constructive reflections on Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist traditions.

*Congratulations!*



*Congratulations!*



Congratulations to **Kyprianos Koutsokoumnis**, PhD candidate in Historical & Cultural Studies, and affiliated with Center for Dharma Studies, for passing his Comprehensive Exams with Distinction. The focus of his work is the *Cross-Cultural Philosophical Theories of Aesthetics & Emotion that Deal with the Sacred in Relation to Earth Ethics*.

His work, as the background for his forthcoming dissertation, focuses on how human emotions “play a distinct role on the need for a metaphysical relationship between humanity and the Earth as viewed by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato and the medieval Indian aesthetic theologian Rupa Gosvami.”

This study includes both a systematic exposition of the philosophical, theological, and aesthetic theories laid down by Plato and Rupa, and the interpretation of symbols or myths from their work.



## Center for Islamic Studies

### CIS Upcoming Events

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CIS is pleased to share that in addition to the spring 2021 course, **COVID-19 and Precarious Life**, co-taught by Dr. Munir Jiwa and Dr. Mahjabeen Dhala, we will continue to host public programming related to the course and to learn from community organizations in their frontline work during the pandemic as part of the GTU Henry Luce Foundation COVID-19 Community Partnership Grants.

Please visit the GTU [website](#) and CIS [webpage](#) for details. We are especially delighted to announce a dedicated webpage related to the grant, with many thanks to all the community partners, and our GTU colleagues, Huzaifa Shahbaz and Matthew Hartman, and the steering committee for all their work. Please visit: <https://www.gtu.edu/projects/lucecovidrelief>

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CIS is planning to host a series of public conversations on **Race and Religion**, on topics including: white supremacy, global ethnonationalism, militarism, poverty, trauma, health, spiritual care, identity and belonging, equity and justice. Please email us with ideas you have: [mjiwa@gtu.edu](mailto:mjiwa@gtu.edu)

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### Welcoming Ramadan While Remaining Vigilant

Sunday, April 11 | 12:00 pm (PDT) | Online

CIS is delighted to share that we will be co-sponsoring an online event, Welcoming Ramadan While Remaining Vigilant, led by Sundiata Al Rashid, Amir of Lighthouse Mosque and GTU PhD student.

Please see the CIS [webpage](#) for details as well as for a series of reflections being held throughout the blessed month of Ramadan.

### Congratulations Carol Bier

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Congratulations to **Carol Bier**, CIS/GTU research scholar, who will be participating in the Historians of Islamic Art and Architecture symposium, April 15-18, for participating in a 10-session course on “Discussing Islamic Art, Aesthetics, and Visuality,” by Valerie Gonzalez, Azad University/Oxford International Collaborative Centre, March-April, and for her forthcoming publication, “*Geometry in Art*,” Encyclopaedia of Islam, 3 (Leiden: Brill).



# Madrasa-Midrasha

## Summer 2021 Interreligious Research Grants

The Madrasa-Midrasha Program is pleased to announce research grants for GTU students working on interreligious projects related to Judaism and/or Islam, made possible by the Walter & Elise Haas Fund.



The Walter & Elise Haas Fund has provided funding to the GTU’s Madrasa-Midrasha Program to support research grants for GTU students working on interreligious projects related to Judaism and/or Islam.

- Grants range from \$250 to \$500 for individual projects and \$500 to \$1000 for joint projects.
- Students must be in the GTU MA or PhD degree program focusing on Jewish Studies and/or Islamic Studies and/or have registered for a CJS or CIS class this academic year.
- Proposed projects must be interreligious, or relevant to interreligious work. Projects that address both Judaism and Islam will be given priority.



Proposals should be submitted to the Director of the Madrasa-Midrasha Program— Dr. Mahjabeen Dahla ([mahdhala@gtu.edu](mailto:mahdhala@gtu.edu)) by **Monday, April 5, 2021**.

Please [visit the announcement page](#) for more info.

## Center for Jewish Studies

### Inaugural Lecture for the Taube Family Chair in Jewish Studies

#### Gender in Martin Buber's Hasidic Tales

Thursday, April 29, 2021 | 12:00pm (PT) | Online



Presented by Taube Family Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies—Sam Shonkoff

Opening words by Tad Taube, *Taube Philanthropies*

Response by Judith Plaskow, *Manhattan College*

Register [here](#) for this event!

For more info, please visit the [CJS Event Page](#)

### Race and Responsibility: Black-Jewish Relations and the Fight for Equal Justice

Monday, April 12, 2021 | 5:00pm (PT) | Online

Join us for a co-sponsored event with UC Berkeley as part of our Jews and Race series from the Fall. For additional information about this event and to watch the livestream on UC Berkeley's website, please [click here](#).

Please visit the [CJS Events Page](#) for more information.



### CJS Spring 2021 Series

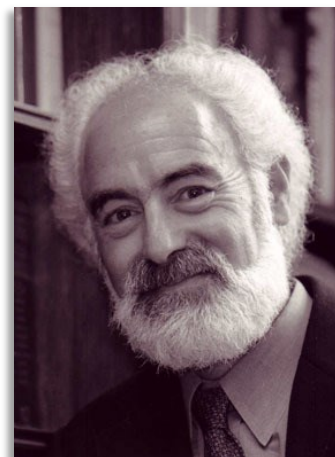
#### Revelation and Contemporary Jewish Theology

Thursday, April 22, 2021 | 12:00pm (PT) | Online

Please join CJS for the final installment in our Spring "conversations@cjs" series on critical topics in the field of Jewish Studies.

Featuring: Dr/ Michael Fishbane, Nathan Cummings Distinguished Service Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Chicago in conversation with Sam Shonkoff, GTU Center for Jewish Studies

Visit the [conversations@cjs Event Page](#) for more information!



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

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### CLGS Transgender Event: An Exploration of Queer and Trans Ministry with our Transgender Seminarian Cohort

Wednesday, April 7, 2021 | 12:30pm - 1:45pm (PT) | Online

Click [here](#) for the Zoom link for this event!

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### CLGS Lavender Lunch with Mama Celeste: Drag & The Divine

Tuesday, April 13, 2021 | 12:15pm - 1:15pm (PT) | Online

Click [here](#) to join this Lavender Lunch!



### 2021 CLGS John E. Boswell Lecture: Lama Rod Owens Speaks on Love and Rage: The Path to Liberation

Thursday, April 15, 2021 | 6:30pm - 8:30pm (PT) | Online

Co-sponsored with the GTU Institute of Buddhist Studies

Register [here](#) for this Zoom lecture!

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### CLGS Queer and Latinx Faith Conversation: “LGBTQIA+ and Faith in Brazil” with Rev. Arthur Cavalcante, Rector of Holy Trinity (Episcopal/Anglican) in São Paulo, Brazil

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 | 2:00pm - 3:15pm (PT) | Online

Click [here](#) for the Zoom link for this event!

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### CLGS Lavender Lunch: “Clobber the Passages”: Queer People and The Seven Deadly Biblical Verses with Rev. Mel White

Tuesday, April 27, 2021 | 12:15pm - 1:15pm (PT) | Online

Click [here](#) to join this Lavender Lunch!

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### CLGS Jewish Queeries Series Event: “Finding Your True Self: Musings of a Black Bisexual” with Chris Harrison

Thursday, April 29, 2021 | 1:00pm - 2:15pm (PT) | Online

Click [here](#) for the Zoom link for this event!



## Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences

### The Doctrine of Atonement of Extraterrestrial Life

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**CTNS Public Forum on Zoom, Tuesday, April 20, 2021 | 5:00pm (PT)**

Dr. Junghyung Kim, Assistant Professor, Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary, Seoul

If extraterrestrial intelligent life (ETI) exists, in my judgement, one of the greatest challenges to Christian faith will concern the doctrine of atonement. In fact, there are diverse models of atonement in the history of Christian thought. It will be very interesting to see which model of atonement could survive the discovery of ETI, and which models turn out too anthropocentric and geocentric to be tenable. This thought experiment on the premise of the future discovery of ETI, I believe, will shed light on several uncritical prejudices underlying traditional Christian doctrines and help reconstruct a Christian theology of atonement for an age of science, even if the premise never becomes true.

**Junghyung Kim** is a GTU graduate, who wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on "Cosmic Hope in a Scientific Age" (2011). He is now teaching as an associate professor at Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary, Seoul, South Korea. His recent publications include "Toward a Constructive Eschatology: An Appraisal of Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen's Contributions" (2020), "Six Different Theological Responses to the Scientific Prediction of the Decaying Universe" (2019), "Toward a Theology of Cosmic Hope: From Theo-anthropology to Theo-cosmology" (2018), "Christian Anthropology in an Age of Science: Between Anthropocentrism and Non-Anthropocentrism" (2018), and *The Doctrine of Creation: Belief in the Creator in an Age of Science* (2019, in Korean). He received the First Prize in the ISSR Essay Competition in Honor of John Polkinghorne (2010, International Society for Science and Religion) and the Charles H. Townes Graduate Fellowship in Theology and Science (2009-2010, Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences).



This CTNS public forum is free and open to the public. Please send an email to Melissa Moritz, [mmoritz@gtu.edu](mailto:mmoritz@gtu.edu) to register and receive the Zoom link, or click on the "Register Here" icon.

### Russell Family Fellowship in Religion and Science

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Regretfully, we are postponing the 2021 Russell Family Fellowship events for several months due to unforeseen circumstances.



## Digital Learning

### Workshops and Faculty Consultations

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The Digital Learning Department continues to provide resources to help instructors teach with remote modalities. The Director of 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 be provided remotely through Zoom. **Please RSVP for each workshop** by emailing [derickson@gtu.edu](mailto:derickson@gtu.edu) to receive the Zoom link. Below is a list of workshops that will be offered in April:

#### Designing Engaging Online Presentations: Effective Visual Design

Thursday, April 8th, 11am

Friday, April 9th, 11am

##### About this workshop:

It is difficult to produce effective online lectures and presentations with boring and text-heavy PowerPoint slides. Effective visual design enhances the delivery of your learning content and helps make the content clearer for the learner. This workshop discusses how to create effective presentations and lectures so that students can “*see what the instructor is trying to say.*”

#### Developing Remote Learning Content for Diverse Learning Styles

Thursday, April 15th, 11am

Friday, April 16th, 11am

##### About this workshop:

When teaching, it is important to acknowledge that different students learn in different ways. Some students are audio learners, visual learners, kinesthetic/tactile learners, and more. This workshop provides strategies for delivering remote learning content in a variety of ways that can help accommodate a diverse set of learning styles in the online classroom.



Sign-up for any of the above workshops by clicking [here](#) and to receive the Zoom ID

## GTU Professional Development Program Workshops

### A Conversation with the GTU Excellence in Teaching Awards

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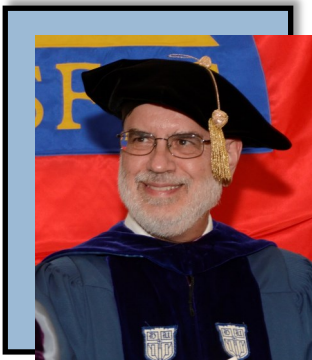
Wednesday, April 21, 2021 | 10:00-11:00am (PT)

Zoom ID: 978 6840 4257



**Dr. Rebecca Esterson (2020)**

Assistant professor in sacred texts and traditions and Dorothea Harvey professor of Swedenborgian studies, is the recipient of the 2020 GTU Excellence in Teaching Award.



**Dr. Arthur Holder (2019)**

Professor of Christian Spirituality and former Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs (2002-2016), is the recipient of the 2019 GTU Excellence in Teaching Award.

**A special word of welcome to all the Newhall Fellows**

To learn more about the GTU Excellence in Teaching Award, please click [here](#)

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### Join the Conversation-Alumni Experiences As Teachers

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Wednesday, April 7, 2021 | 10:00-11:00am (PT)

Zoom ID: 978 6840 4257

Learn how our alumni landed in teaching positions and their experiences as teachers at various schools.

**Panelists:**

**Dr. Beth Ritter-Conn**

Lecturer in the College of Theology and Christian Ministry at Belmont University

**Dr. Dustyn Ragasa**

Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Chaminade University

**Dr. Khalia Williams**

Assistant Professor in the Practice of Worship at Candler School of Theology of Emory University



## GTU Alum Micah Jackson as Featured “Day 1” Speaker

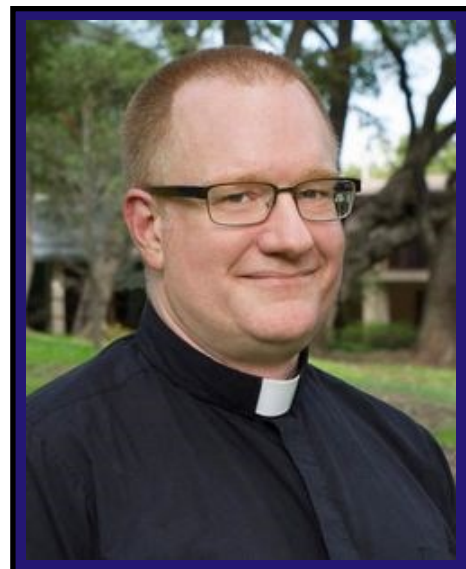
The Rev. Dr. Micah T. J. Jackson, president of Bexley Seabury Seminary in Chicago, is the featured preacher April 18, 2021, on “Day 1” with host Peter Wallace, the nationally broadcast ecumenical radio program also accessible online at [Day1.org](http://Day1.org) and by podcast.

“Witness for the Resurrection” is Jackson’s sermon for April 18. It is based on the account of Jesus’s resurrection appearance to his disciples found in Luke 24: 36b-48. He says, “The truth about Jesus is not always comfortable to tell and it isn’t always comfortable to hear.”

Before assuming the presidency of Bexley Seabury in June 2018, Jackson was the Bishop John Hines Associate Professor of Preaching and director of Comprehensive Wellness at the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Tex. He earned a M.T.S. from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, a M.Div. from Leadville Lombard Theological School, and a Ph.D. from Graduate Theological Union.

The program includes interviews with Jackson conducted by Wallace, who is also executive producer.

“Day 1” has been broadcast every week for 76 years, formerly as “The Protestant Hour.” Featuring outstanding preachers from the mainline denominations, “Day 1” is currently distributed to more than 200 radio stations across America and overseas. The program is produced by the Alliance for Christian Media, based in Atlanta, GA. For more information, check the program’s website, <http://day1.org>.



*The national weekly ecumenical radio program produced by the Alliance for Christian Media*  
Contact: Peter Wallace, (404) 815-0258, [pwallace@day1.org](mailto:pwallace@day1.org) or Ethel Ware Carter,  
(404) 418-6770, [ewcarter@day1.org](mailto:ewcarter@day1.org)



## 3rd Annual Berkeley Palmer Lecture

Saturday, April 10, 2021 | 7:00pm (PT) | Online

### Fleeing the Hot Spots: Climate Change, Migration, and Mission

New College Berkeley invites you to the 3rd Annual Berkeley Palmer Lecture with Ruth Padilla DeBorst, PhD  
Cospnsored with First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley

[Registration Link](#)

**Dr. Ruth Padilla DeBorst** is a well-known Latin American theologian who has been involved in leadership development and theological education for several decades. She passionately pursues ecological justice, authentic community, and participative, contextual forms of theological education. Dr. Padilla DeBorst is currently a visiting faculty at Regent College in Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

The Berkeley Palmer Lectureship (BPL), launched by New College Berkeley and First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley in 2018, examines current biblical scholarship at the intersection of the Church and the Academy. This lectureship brings the lens of biblical scholarship to issues of concern to the university, the seminary, and the church. Learn more about the BPL [here](#).

BERKELEY PALMER  
LECTURESHP



#### Student Seminar

Saturday, April 10, 2021 | 2:00pm | Zoom

This event is designed for students, from undergraduates to graduate and seminary students, but all are welcome.

#### Pre-Session: "Our Changing Atmosphere: Evidences that Demand a Verdict?"

Friday, April 9, 2021 | 7:00pm | Zoom

with Dr. Jeffrey Reimer, UC Berkeley Chair of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

[Registration Link](#)



## The Dean's Office Spring Lectures

### Surjit Singh Lecture

Monday, April 5, 2021 | 12:00pm (PDT) | Online (Free)



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.

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."

"In light of the predominant narratives of religious hatreds, conflict, and the decline of religious pluralism throughout the world, the existence of shared sacred sites that bring different religions together act as prescient reminders of the possibilities presented by tolerance," Dr. Barkey said. "This lecture focuses on shared sacred sites, places that are holy for members of multiple religious groups, and how the participants in these sites mediate, negotiate, and come to accept difference. Drawing upon three summers of ethnographic research, I will examine the stories people tell about belonging to a space, and the stories of sharing that become embedded within the local culture."

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](#).

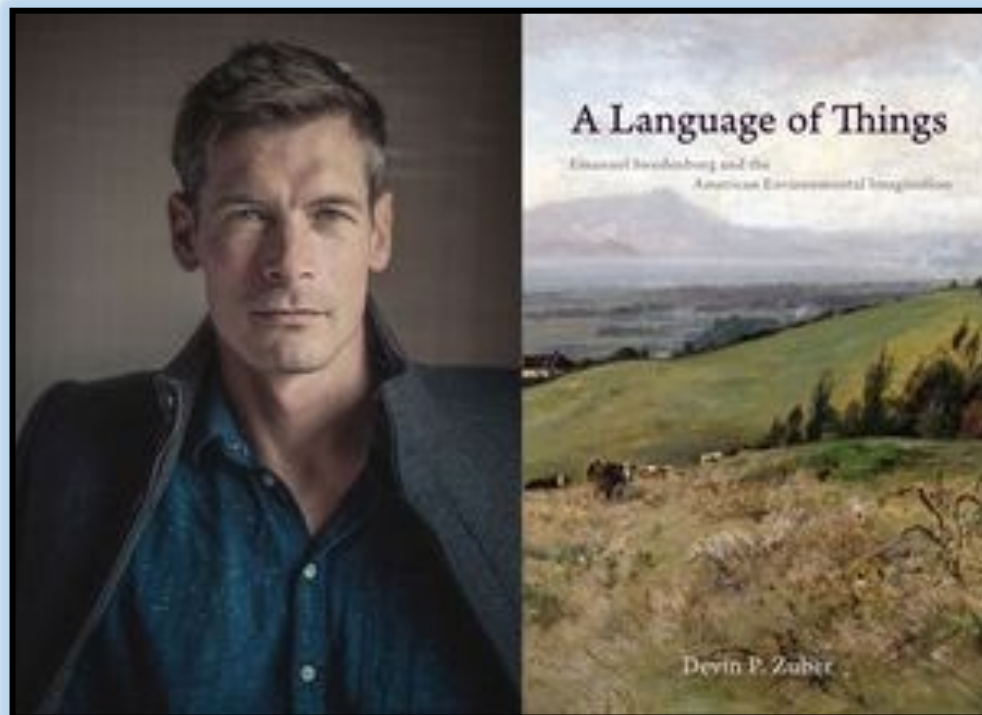
Please register for this event on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-surjit-singh-lecture-by-dr-karen-barkey-tickets-136333803075>

Register  
Now!

## The Dean's Office Spring Lectures

**Borsch-Rast Book Prize and Lectureship (2020 Recipient)**

**Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 5:00pm (PDT) | Online (Free)**



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).

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. 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>





## 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](mailto:dmagallanes@gtu.edu)

Diana Magallanes, Assistant to the Interim Dean

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Graduate Theological Union Office of the Dean

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