

GTU Dean's Newsletter

FROM THE DEAN



The GTU is a member of the Council on Graduate Studies in Religion (CGSR), which is “a consultative body made up of over 30 preeminent institutions in the United States and Canada that offer the PhD in Religion, Religious Studies, or Theology” (1). The CGSR’s mission is to foster graduate studies in religion and theology in all its dimensions and meets once a year during the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature to conduct its business. (One of the benefits of being part of this Council is that doctoral candidates from member schools can sign up to join the Council’s network of students to exchange information and resources.) The Council spent about ninety minutes on mental health issues of graduate students. We used an article entitled “Mental Health Crisis for Grad Students” (2), which summarizes a study that shows that the problem of mental health issues among graduate students has reached a crisis, to prompt discussion on how schools could respond more effectively to deal with this growing crisis.

It turns out that graduate students are at greater risk for mental health issues than those in the general population; in fact, more than six times as likely to experience depression and anxiety as compared to the general population. The article points out that “this is largely due to social isolation, the often abstract nature of the work and feelings of inadequacy – not to mention the slim tenure-track job market.” In our discussion, there was a consensus that social isolation is most acute after the course work when students are expected to work on their own to finish their comprehensive exams and write their dissertation. The study urges proactive actions on the part of institutions rather than waiting for students to seek help. The GTU doesn’t have its own center for mental health and wellness, but it does provide a list of resources and centers for students to start their search to meet their needs (3). We cannot match the resources many schools of the CGSR have, but we can be as good as any school, regardless of the size of school or endowment, with one resource that impacts graduate students’ mental health. The article points out that “strong, supportive and positive mentoring relationships between graduate students and their PI/advisors correlate significantly with less anxiety and depression.” I will put this important topic on the agenda for the Core Doctoral Faculty to discuss at its next meeting.



Uriah Y. Kim, PhD.
 GTU Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs
 John Dillenberger Professor of Biblical Studies

1. <https://www.gradstudiesinreligion.org>
2. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/03/06/new-study-says-graduate-students-mental-health-crisis>
3. <https://www.gtu.edu/students/health-and-wellness>



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Dean of Students, PDP workshops, & CARE events 2

CIS News & Events, SE-PHERE Lab 3

Library News & Honorable Mentions 4

From the Dean of Students

Intent to Graduate forms

For Spring 2019 graduates are due on Tuesday, January 15 to the GTU Dean's Office for MAs, and for PhD/ThDs, submit to the GTU Office Manager Sean Albrecht. Forms are available on the web site at <https://www.gtu.edu/students/gtu-commencement>

Mid-Year Orientation for First Year Doctoral Students

There will be a required mid-year "orientation" for doctoral students who started in the program during fall semester, 2018. The orientation will be Wednesday, January 23, 2019 from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. in the Dinner Board room. A tasty lunch will be provided!

January Biblical Hebrew and Greek Exams

Register for the Biblical Hebrew and Greek language exams by December 14. Contact Fredonia Thompson, Academic Secretary, ftompson@gtu.edu. The Biblical Hebrew and Greek exams will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, January 9-10, 2019, respectively, from 9:00 a.m. to noon each day.

Spring Doctoral Student Forum, February 13, 12:30-2pm, Student Lounge, 2465 LeConte.
Lunch provided.

Professional Development Workshops

February 6, Proposing Comprehensive Exams, 11am, Student Lounge

February 13, Teaching Portfolio: CVs and Cover Letters, 2:30pm, CLS/Library

February 27, Teaching Portfolio: Teaching Philosophy and Sample Syllabi, 2:30pm, CLS/Library

Center for Arts and Religion News & Events

Our Fall 2018 exhibition, *Gestures to the Divine: Works by Hagit Cohen* will be closing on **December 13!** Don't miss this last opportunity to see the show.

Brown Bag Lunch; Friday, **December 7** | 12-1pm: Michaela Eskew (GTU PhD candidate in Arts & Religion) will be talking about spirituality in Vincent van Gogh's life and work.

Third Thursdays at BAMPFA; Thursday, **December 13** | 4:30pm – 5:30pm: Thomas Cattoi (GTU/JST-SCU Associate Professor of Christology and Cultures, Dwan Family Endowed Chair in Ecumenical and Interfaith Dialogue) will respond to the exhibition, *Boundless: Contemporary Tibetan Artists at Home and Abroad*. Join us in the lobby of the Berkeley Art Museum (2155 Center St.) to receive your complimentary museum admission ticket.

Center for Islamic Studies News & Events

CIS is delighted to host conversations at the de Young Museum on the current exhibition: Contemporary Muslim Fashions. Dec 11/12, from 2-5pm. For more info: mdhala@gtu.edu

Congratulations to CIS research scholar Carol Bier for her review of the Contemporary Muslim Fashions Exhibition being published in the Textile Society's Newsletter.

Congratulations to PhD Presidential Scholar, Mahjabeen Dhala who will be one of the featured speakers at the upcoming Muslim Unity Conference: Bringing Sunnis & Shias Together, to be held on Dec 15, 2018, at Saba Islamic Center in San Jose. For more info: mdhala@gtu.edu

Congratulations to CIS Director, Dr. Munir Jiwa, who has been invited to participate in Lancaster Seminary's Luce-funded project on Current and Future Directions in Theological Education. The site visit will be hosted at GTU January 15-16, 2019, and Dr. Jiwa will present on: Interreligious Education and Public Engagement for Theological Schools.

As a member and chair-elect 2019 for the AAR's Standing Committee on Racial and Ethnic Minorities, Dr. Jiwa will be attending the AAR Summit for the leadership of the AAR's four standing committees in Atlanta, Jan 18-20, 2019. We also express our gratitude to CIS visiting scholar, Dr. Nargis Virani for her years of leadership in chairing the AAR CREM committee.

Congratulations and gratitude to CIS/GTU alum, Sammy Rahmatti, who is now serving as the Muslim Spiritual Care Service Coordinator at Stanford Hospital. If interested in volunteering, please contact: sammy. rahmatti@gmail.com

43rd Annual GTU Distinguished Faculty Lecture Available Online

The GTU's 43rd Annual Distinguished Faculty Lecture, given by Dr. Marianne Farina, CSC, Professor of Philosophy and Theology at Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, and entitled "Follow the Women: Freeing Dialogue" was presented on Tuesday November 13th, 2018.

Now available on GTU's [website](#) are a video of her lecture and the response given by Dr. Rita D. Sherma (Director, Center for Dharma Studies at the GTU), as well as the lecture notes and slides from the presentation.

Please enjoy!

Library News

Did you know the library has DVDs and CDs? We've recently moved our media collection to be next to the reference books. These items can be found in the catalog or you can browse the collection. Stock up for your winter break!

Honorable Mentions

MA/MABL

Anne-Marie Fowler, JST-SCU, *Honors*

Comprehensive Proposal Approved

Beena Poulouse Kallely, THET

Oral Comprehensive Passed

Thomas Calobrisi, HCSR, *Distinction*

Jinseok Kim, IDS

C. Alixx Ortiz-Roberts, BIBL

Sheryl Johnson, THET, *Distinction*

Advanced to Candidacy

Sarah Kohles, SATX

Pravina Rodrigues, THET



Graduate
Theological
Union

THE DEAN'S NEWSLETTER

The Dean's Newsletter is for official notices from the GTU Dean's Office regarding academic affairs and for announcements of educational events (lectures, conferences) focusing on academic research and thus of particular interest to faculty and MA and PhD students. Send submissions to Wendy Arce, warce@gtu.edu

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