HINDU STUDIES COMES TO THE GTU

Dr. Arthur Holder
Academic Dean and
Vice President of
Academic Affairs

The study of Asian religions at the GTU goes back at least to 1971 with the creation of a doctoral area of study then called History and Phenomenology of Religions (now Cultural and Historical Studies of Religions), which was originally intended to focus on what the school catalog called “the Hindu-Buddhist complex.” Over the years, courses on Hindu philosophy and theology have been offered on an occasional basis at several different GTU member schools. But something new is happening now, and it is very exciting.

As announced last spring, the GTU has entered into a partnership with the Dharma Studies Foundation to develop a robust program in Hindu Studies here. The first two courses were offered in fall 2014, and two more are scheduled for spring 2015: “Philosophies of Religion: India and the West” and “Gandhi and Nonviolence,” both taught by Dr. Purushottama Bilimoria who has been a visiting professor at UC Berkeley for several years.

We are now delighted to welcome Dr. Rita Sherma to the GTU as Associate Professor of Dharma Studies and Director of the Hindu Studies initiative. For the past two years she has been the Swami Vivekananda Visiting Faculty in Hindu Studies at the University of Southern California. Since receiving her Ph.D. in Theology and Ethics from Claremont Graduate University, she has published five edited volumes and served as an editor-in-chief of the International Journal of Dharma Studies, editor of the Hinduism volume of the forthcoming Encyclopedia of Indian Religions, and co-founder of the Dharma Academy of North America (DANAM). She is currently completing a book that envisions a contemporary Hindu ecological theology of the divine feminine.

In this month of February the Council of Deans and the Academic Committee of the GTU Board of Trustees will be considering proposals for an MA area of concentration in Hindu Studies and a Certificate in Hindu Studies that can be taken either independently or in conjunction with any degree program in the GTU or a member school.

Finally, on April 10 we will welcome Professor Anantanand Rambachan from St. Olaf College in Minnesota who will give the annual Surjit Singh Lecture on Comparative Religious Thought and Culture on the topic of “Interreligious Relations as Friendship: Mahatma Gandhi and Charles Freer Andrews.”

Full details are available in an announcement inside this issue of the Dean’s Newsletter.

Many people have worked hard to bring Hindu Studies to the GTU. We can be grateful that the study of the world’s third largest religious tradition is now a part of this wonderful ecumenical and interreligious community.
Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) and the Reverend Charles Freer Andrews (1871-1940) shared an extraordinary relationship. From 1914, until his death in 1940, Andrews worked closely with Gandhi in the Indian independence movement and in the service of India. Their relationship blossomed quickly and remains an illuminating example of friendship across traditions. This lecture examines the shared commitments that brought this remarkable Hindu and Christian pair together, as well as the challenges and risks of their friendship.

Dr. Anantanand Rambachan is Professor of Religion at Saint Olaf College in Minnesota, where he has been teaching since 1985. A native of Trinidad, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom. He is the author of several books including Accomplishing the Accomplished, The Limits of Scripture, The Advaita Worldview: God, World and Humanity, and Not-Two: A Hindu Theology of Liberation (forthcoming). The British Broadcasting Corporation transmitted a series of his lectures around the world. For over twenty years, Professor Rambachan has been involved in the field of interreligious relations as a Hindu participant and analyst. He was a guest participant in the last four General Assemblies of the World Council of Churches, and he is a regular participant in the consultations of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican and an educator on interfaith issues in Minnesota.

**CARE News & Events**

**Present Absence:**
Icons from the Collection of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute
February 3 - May 29, 2015
Opening Reception, Thursday, February 5, 2015 | 5-7pm
Doug Adams Gallery

This exhibition invites us to explore the paradoxical nature of icons as embodiments of both material beauty and divine presence. These 16 icons, primarily 18th- and 19th-c. works from Russia, comprise the first exhibition from the collection of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute.

**Brown Bag Lunch**
“Un/Catholic Confessions: On Passing for Christian”
Guest Speaker: Michelle Summers, CARE Fall 2014 Grant Recipient

**Friday, February 6 | 12-1pm**
Doug Adams Gallery

Based on ethnographic research on sacred dance and the work of both Carla DeSola and the evangelical ballet company Ballet Magnificat!, this presentation considers how religious identity is read on and through the dancing body, and how dancers negotiate religious power structures. Funded in part by a grant from CARE, Dr. Summers presented this work at the 2014 Society for Dance History Scholars and Congress on Research in Dance joint conference at the University of Iowa.

**“Pragmatism… she widens the field of search for God”**
Speaker: Joan Richardson
Tuesday, February 20 | 5-7pm
370 Dwinelle Hall

William James once described Pragmatism as continuing the work of the Protestant Reformation, admitting all the possibilities of belief that belonged to a pluralistic universe. In Pragmatism (1907), James writes; “We do not yet know which type of religion is going to work best in the long run. The various overbeliefs of men, the several faith-ventures, are in fact what is needed to bring the evidence in.” This religious dimension of Pragmatism, which has long been persistently ignored/repressed, will be the subject of Joan Richardson’s presentation.
SFTS Event: John Bell Workshops

San Francisco Theological Seminary
Center for Innovation in Ministry
John Bell – February Workshops in Stewart Chapel

John Bell is a world-renowned liturgical composer and a member of the Iona Community. His primary concern is the renewal of congregational worship at the grass roots level.

Tuesday, February 17, 7-8:30pm
Levity & Lament
The Season of Lent temporarily brings an end to the singing of Alleluias, and encourages people to rediscover the significance of penitence and lament. We will move from exploring and singing songs of celebration - a loud blast of Alleluias - to the more meditative songs of lament.
SEATING IS LIMITED.
Register at tinyurl.com/JohnBellEarth

For more information about applying these workshops towards credit in the Certificate in Worship Leadership program, please contact Petey Thornton at 415.451.2860 or pthornton@sfts.edu.

105 Seminary Rd., San Anselmo, CA 94960 | 415.451.2841 | klalahaye@sfts.edu | www.sfts.edu

Earthlings: Religion in an Age of Climate Change

February 8th 2015, 1:00pm
Easton Hall, 2401 Ridge Road Berkeley CA 94709

Our rapidly changing environment has resulted in radical shifts in human relations and our relationship with the planet. What is the role of religion in this new era? This conference will feature contributions including from the Center for Jewish Studies, the Center for Islamic Studies, the Center for Theology, and Rabbi Michael Lerner of Tikkun Magazine.
1. Doctoral Council
February 4, 2015
Dinner Board Room
GTU Library

2. Doctoral Student
Teaching Conversations
February 11, 201512pm
Student Lounge
2465 LeConte Ave.
Creating networks and support groups for student teachers provides us with a space where we can help each other strengthen our confidence and our skills. In order to begin building this community PDP is hosting a doctoral student teacher lunch. Students who are teaching, have taught, or will teach (TA positions, Newhalls, Adjunct positions, etc.) are invited to participate in fruitful small group conversations with other student teachers over a nice meal. PDP will provide guiding questions to help facilitate discussions. If you would like to attend please RSVP (dchretain@gtu.edu) and briefly indicate your level of teaching experience.

3. CV/Cover Letter Workshop
with Dr. Bradley Burroughs Feb. 25th 10am-12pm
Student Lounge
2465 LeConte Ave.

2015 SARLO EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

The Sarlo Excellence in Teaching Award is given each year to a member of the Core Doctoral Faculty whose teaching and mentoring of doctoral students embodies the values of interreligious dialogue and interdisciplinary approach to teaching. The next recipient of this honor, which entails a substantial monetary award, will be announced at the GTU Commencement on May 7, 2015.

Selection will be made by the Appointments and Review Committee of the Core Doctoral Faculty, with the addition of the GTU President as a voting member for this purpose. The Faculty Council has approved a nomination procedure in which a list of candidates will be composed from nominations submitted by doctoral and MA students through the Areas of Study in the doctoral program.

The Area Student Assistant in each area will be responsible for facilitating a process by which students in the area can help each other strengthen our confidence and our skills. In order to begin building this community PDP is hosting a doctoral student teacher lunch. Students who are teaching, have taught, or will teach (TA positions, Newhalls, Adjunct positions, etc.) are invited to participate in fruitful small group conversations with other student teachers over a nice meal. PDP will provide guiding questions to help facilitate discussions. If you would like to attend please RSVP (dchretain@gtu.edu) and briefly indicate your level of teaching experience.

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The faculty person nominated may be from within the area, or from another area. The name of the one Core Doctoral Faculty member nominated by an area’s students should be forwarded to the GTU Dean by the Area Student Assistant as soon as possible, but no later than Friday, March 20. The selection criteria are as follows:

a. Eligible candidates are active members of the Core Doctoral Faculty.

b. Candidates exhibit creative and effective pedagogical methods and performance, both in the classroom and in their advising and mentoring of doctoral students.

c. Candidates exhibit ecumenical and/or interreligious sensitivity and commitment in their teaching, regardless of the subject matter or field.

d. Candidates exhibit and promote effective use of interdisciplinary approaches, as appropriate to their fields.

e. Candidates display sensitivity to ethnic and cultural diversity.

f. Sarlo Award recipients may be selected only once.

2015-2016 FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION DEADLINES

Financial Aid Applicants: please find your deadline date below and visit the GTU Consortial Financial Aid website for instructions on how to complete and submit the 2015-16 Financial Aid Application and Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Common MA Students affiliated with:
- ABSW  April 15, 2015
- CIS    April 1, 2015
- CJS    April 1, 2015
- DSPT   March 15, 2015
- IBS    April 1, 2015
- JST    March 1, 2015
- PAOI   April 1, 2015
- PLTS   March 15, 2015
- PSR    February 15, 2015
- SFTS   April 15, 2015
- SKSM   April 1, 2015

2015-2016 NEWHALL AWARD RECIPIENTS

In 1987, the late trustee Jane Newhall gave a generous gift to endow competitive awards for doctoral students to engage in collaborative teaching or research with faculty mentors in the belief that such collaborative work would contribute to the professional development of the students.

GTU Doctoral Students
- (New): February 1, 2015
- (Continuing): February 15, 2015

GTU Doctoral Students paired with their Faculty mentors are: Beth Anderson with Elizabeth Liebert, Matt Boswell with Hung Pham, Diandra Chretain with Arthur Holder, Nicole De Leon with Naomi Seidman, Reem Javed with Judith Berling, Christina Fetherolf with John Endres, Sungae Kim with Ahn Tran, Cassie Lipowitz with Ibrahim Farajáč, Justin Lipscomb with Judith Berling, Cesar Melgar with LeAnn Snow Flesher, Mauricio Najarro and Marvin L. Wiser with Naomi Seidman, Cristofr A. Ortiz with Aaron Brody, Robert Peach with Boyung Lee, Seumaninoa Puaina with Gina Hens-Piazza, Eleanor Shapiro with Naomi Seidman.

DOCTORAL STUDENT ELECTIONS

A call for nominations for student elections will be coming to you via email very soon. Think about who would make excellent members of the Student Advisory Committee, Doctoral Council, and other excellent opportunities to participate and be of service. Nominate and vote when the opportunity comes. Nominations will be due to dchretain@gtu.edu by February 27, and elections will be held March 9-20.

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GTU STUDENT TRAVEL GRANT CYCLE #2 APPLICATION DEADLINE IS TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2015 AT 5PM

The second cycle deadline to compete for a GTU Student Travel Grant is Tuesday, February 17, 2015 at 5pm in the GTU Dean’s Office. GTU doctoral students who are presenting papers at national conferences and meetings between February 1, 2015 and June 30, 2015 are eligible to apply for the second cycle. Additionally, the GTU Student Travel Grant Application form must accompany supporting materials. The application form is available on the GTU webpage. (Go to "Current Students" across the top banner and then scroll down to the "Professional Development" subheading and the link for the application will be listed there.) For more information, please consult the 2014 Doctoral Program Handbook (p. 77), call the GTU Dean’s Office (649.2440), or email amunoz@gtu.edu.
GTU Library News

Expanded Reference Desk Hours
The library is expanding reference desk hours for the spring semester. There will now be a librarian available until 8pm on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, and all day on Sunday.

Introduction to Graduate Research Workshop
Graduate-level research requires more than basic searching. You will learn how to use the GTU library’s online catalog GRACE to find books and other resources, and how to use the ATLA, JSTOR, and 360 Search databases to locate full-text journal articles or citation information. The workshop is approximately 1 hour and will be conducted in the Teaching Lab.
Tuesday, February 10, 1 pm
Wednesday, February 18, 11 am

In addition, brief additional instruction can be arranged with the Reference Librarian.

Art Exhibition News
The library art exhibition, “Formless Form, the Art of Sho,” has been extended through February 10. If you haven’t had a chance to stop by to view this wonderful exhibit of Professor Ron Nakasone’s calligraphy, now is the time! The next library exhibition, featuring materials from both the Tibetan community and the GTU archives, will run from February 25 to April 3. A docent program led by Thepo Rinpoche (recognized as the 8th Thepo Tulku) and a cultural event will take place in March. More information will be forthcoming.

Reading of the Sacred Texts
The 23rd annual Sacred Texts Lecture is scheduled for Wednesday, March 11. Thepo Tulku is the featured speaker. A tulku is a custodian of a specific lineage of teachings in Tibetan Buddhism who is given empowerments and trained from a young age by students of his predecessor.

Here is a short excerpt from an article Thepo Tulku wrote entitled “The People of Tibet Need Help Now.”

“On the night of March 17, 1959, the Dalai Lama disguised himself as a Chinese soldier, slipped out of his summer palace, and headed south toward India. He was escorted by his loyal entourage, and by Khampa warriors. At the time, I was five years old. I was living in the Ganden monastery in Tibet, as a reincarnated Tulku. Word of the escape spread quickly. As people throughout Tibet learned of the Dalai Lama’s flight, many decided to make the perilous choice to try and follow him to India. Some of our monastery elders fled, and they took me along with them to exile in India. I was separated from my mother and father. I never saw them again.”

The lecture begins at 7pm; a reception precedes the lecture at 6:30pm. Both the lecture and reception will take place in the GTU Dinner Board Room and are open to the public.
CJS News: The Friedman-Lowenthal Prize

$500 will be awarded to the student with the best Jewish Studies essay written for a GTU course, including those written outside of CJS. Any registered GTU student enrolled in a Jewish Studies course in Spring 2015 can apply. Essays must be submitted by Friday, May 1, 2015.

Center for Islamic Studies: News & Events

February 5 – 12
CIS Visiting Scholar Carol Bier will be giving a series of workshops and lectures in Dubai, UAE, on geometry and Islamic art, to take place in a city transformed in the late twentieth century – and since 2010 site of the world’s tallest building, Burj Khalifa.

Sunday, February 8, 1PM
Earthlings: Religion in an Age of Climate Change
What is the role of religious traditions in the planetary crisis? Join scholars of different traditions in a symposium on this pressing topic. This conference will feature speakers including Michael Lerner, Marcia Falk, and scholars from throughout the GTU. Hosted by the Center for Jewish Studies and co-sponsored by the Center for Islamic Studies and Center for Theology and Natural Sciences. Location: Easton Hall, 2401 Ridge Road, Berkeley, CA 94709.

Thursday, February 26, 6PM
Jazz, Liberation, and the Geopolitics of Malcolm X
Black History Month lecture and 50th year commemoration of Malcolm X by Dr. Hisham Aidi, author of Rebel Music: Race, Empire, and the New Muslim Youth Culture and lecturer at the School of International and Public Affairs and the Institute of African Affairs at Columbia University. Location TBD.

Saturday, February 28, 5-8PM
Islam & Authors Book Reading with Dr. Ejaz Naqvi, “The Qur’an: With or Against the Bible?” Followed by Q&A. Suggested donation: $10 Adults, $5 Students. Co-sponsored by the Center for Islamic Studies. Location: Islamic Cultural Center of Northern California, 1433 Madison Street, Oakland, CA 94612.

Please stay posted to the CIS website at www.gtu.edu/cis for more events during Black History Month.

DSPT Event: Before-and-After Films

A new film series comprising six films that transformed the art of filmmaking and pushed its spiritual frontier.

Join DSPT Fellow Ron Austin – a Hollywood producer and writer, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences member, and Writers Guild lifetime achievement award honoree – for screenings of these six important films. He will introduce them and explain his reasons for choosing them. Ron will lead conversation following each screening for those who wish to stay.

All screening will take place at the DSPT, 2301 Vine Street, on Saturdays at 7pm. The screenings are free and open to all, but RSVPs are required since space is limited.

February 7: The Passion of Joan of Arc (1928) by Carl Theodor Dreyer, RSVP required
March 7: The Bicycle Thief (1948) by Vittorio De Sica, RSVP required
March 21: The 400 Blows (1959) by François Truffaut, RSVP required
April 11: The Mirror (1975) by Andrei Tarkovsky, RSVP required
April 25: Three Colors: Blue (1993) by Krzysztof Kieślowski, RSVP required

For more information, please visit:
http://www.dspt.edu/
HONORABLE MENTION

MA STUDENTS
Thesis Successfully Defended
Yong Kook Ko

PHD STUDENTS
Comprehensive Proposal Approved
Sean Albrecht, BIBL
Michelle Mueller, CHSR
Christina Fetherolf, BIBL
Robert Peach, IDS

Oral Comprehensive Exams Passed
Meredith Massar, ART

Advanced to Candidacy
Susan Aguilar, HIST
Richetta Najuma Amen, BIBL
Ali Ataie, CHSR
Kresten Froistad-Martin, ETHC
Hyeokil Kwon, SPRT

Oral Dissertation Successfully Defended
Peter Doebler, ART
Izak Y. Lattu, IDS

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION

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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 Angela Muñoz, amunoz@gtu.edu.