THE DEAN’S NEWSLETTER

MORE ON REACCREDITATION

Last month I wrote about the report we had received from the team of accreditation visitors from the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) who came to the GTU in October. That report noted eight commendations (things we are doing well) and six recommendations (things where we need to improve).

Just recently we learned the results of this reaccreditation review. The WSCUC commissioners voted to reaffirm accreditation for eight years, with our next visit scheduled for fall 2023. The usual options are either six, eight, or ten years, so this is a solid affirmation of the work we are doing at the GTU.

WSCUC guidelines indicate that reaffirmation for eight years indicates that “the institution is in substantial compliance with the Standards but has one or more identifiable issues that may affect the institution’s ability to carry out its mission at a high level of quality. . . . The evidence gives the Commission confidence that the institution can and will maintain ongoing substantial compliance with all Standards for an eight-year period and that it has a commitment and the capacity to maintain ongoing quality improvement for the duration of this period.”

The GTU will be asked to submit an interim report in March 2019 on certain issues to be specified later. We would expect those issues to include those noted in the visiting team’s recommendations: assessment, program review, a solution to the challenges of bimodal governance (GTU in relation to the member schools), affordability of the doctoral program, enhanced infrastructure for information technology, and diversity in the executive leadership team and faculty. All of these are issues that we are aware of and already beginning to address.

For any school, the reaccreditation process is never really over. Because we are committed to continual improvement, each review cycle gives us an opportunity to find ways to enhance the educational outcomes for our students. In the case of the GTU, this is an opportunity that comes twice. Next year we will be reviewed by the Association of Theological Schools, our other accrediting agency. A self-study report will be due in December, and visiting team from ATS will come to campus in March 2017.

Like an annual physical exam or periodic maintenance on your car, reaccreditation is sometimes tedious or even uncomfortable, but it is absolutely essential to a school’s well-being. The GTU is proud of our longstanding membership in both WSCUC and ATS. With their help, we will continue to provide our students with high quality education for many years to come.

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR TWO-DAY SYMPOSIUM HONORING DR. JUDITH BERLING

On May 25-26, 2016, the GTU will be holding a two-day symposium celebrating the scholarship of Dr. Judith Berling and her 28 years of service as a faculty member and administrator with the GTU consortium.

Dr. Berling’s dedication and holistic participation in boundary-crossing embody the best of the GTU’s approach to education. Her effective and inclusive methods in inter-disciplinary, interreligious, and intercultural learning, teaching, and communication have been instrumental in fostering GTU’s culture of inclusiveness and appreciation for diversity. The GTU invites you to join Dr. Berling’s students, colleagues, and friends from near and far as we gather to share how Dr. Berling has influenced us all in our personal, educational, and professional development.

The Wednesday afternoon session of the symposium will feature the GTU’s 2016 Surjit Singh Lecture by Philip Wickeri.

For the full two-day schedule see the following link: http://gtu.edu/events/celebrating-judith-berling

To register, please go to: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/learning-as-collaborative-conversation-a-symposium-celebrating-judith-berling-tickets-20536801125

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**SPRING BREAK MINI BOOT CAMP**

Does your spring break plan include getting lots of writing done? You are not alone, and now you don’t have to work alone! Join other writing-crazed GTU students for a writing mini-boot-camp (which means focused writing time). This is open to all PhD/ThD students, regardless of whether you are in the coursework, comps, or dissertation stage of the program. You can come for all of the sessions, or come when you can fit it in your schedule. (MA thesis writers are also welcome.)

10am to 3pm, March 21-25.
Dinner Board Room of the GTU Library.
RSVP to awoods@ses.gtu.edu.

**ASIA PROJECT 2016 SPRING CONFERENCE: NEW VOICES OF ASIA AND OCEANIA**

Asia Project at the GTU cordially invites you to attend our 2016 Spring event which will showcase student dissertation projects.

**Monday, April 4 2016**
12:30-2:00 PM
Dinner Board Room (GTU Library, 3rd floor)

It will be a small conference of selected dissertation topics in the concentration of Asian, Asian-American, and Oceanic context. Free lunch and open to anyone interested.

If you have recently completed or are planning to complete your dissertation in Spring 2016, Asia Project strongly encourages you to participate as a presenter in the conference. Our tentative deadline for the proposal/application submission is Friday, March 11. For further information please contact the Program Coordinator at asia-project@ses.gtu.edu or Program Assistant, pastorpeterpark@gmail.com.

**DOCTORAL STUDENT ELECTIONS**

**MAKE SURE TO VOTE FOR DOCTORAL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES BETWEEN MARCH 7-18. BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR YOUR EBALLOT AND CAST YOUR IMPORTANT VOTE.**

**GTU GRAD FAIR**

The Graduate Theological Union invites you to our **Graduate Fair on Saturday, April 9th, from 11:00am-2:00pm** in the Dinner Board Room at the GTU Library. Learn more about the GTU and its programs. The event features a faculty panel and time to discuss program options with current GTU students and Admissions staff. All interested in the Master of Arts programs at the GTU and its member schools are welcome to attend. Current students are encouraged to bring interested friends!

Please RSVP—lunch will be provided. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Andrea Sheaffer and the GTU Admissions staff at admissions@gtu.edu.

**INSTITUTE FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES**

**NEWS AND EVENTS**

2016 IBS Winter Symposium
Buddhism and Agriculture
March 3 @ 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Marriott Hotel and Visalia Convention Center, Visalia, CA

Co-sponsored by the Center for Buddhist Education and hosted in conjunction with the BCA National Council, this year’s symposium features talks by Revs. Marvin Harada and Seigen Yamaoka as well as former IBS and current Ryukoku University Professor Dr. Eisho Nasu.

2016 Ryukoku Lecture
March 7 and 9, 2:00-5:00 pm
Jodo Shinshu Center
Berkeley, CA

Our annual Ryukoku Lecture series will be given by Dr. Eisho Nasu, professor of Shin Buddhist Studies at Ryukoku University. His talks are titled: Genshin’s Pure Land Dialogical Hermeneutics: Its Influence on the Formation of Shinran’s Thought.

Shinran and Continental Philosophy: Shinran, Heidegger, and Levinas
April 16
Jodo Shinshu Center
Berkeley, CA 94704

Sponsored by Ryukoku University and the IBS’s Center for Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies, this one-day symposium will feature talks by Dennis Harota, Charles Hallisey, David Matsumoto, and others bringing Shinran’s thought into conversation with contemporary continental philosophy.
Crossings/Mojándose: Works by Sandra C. Fernández

On view through May 27, 2016
CARE’s Doug Adams Gallery
Regular Gallery Hours
Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays | 10am-3pm
1798 Scenic Avenue, Berkeley

Sandra C. Fernández’s exhibition showcases her new series, “Borders.” These embellished prints contemplate both the concept of borders as well as their reality, by focusing on the objects left behind by those crossing the Rio Grande. While the beauty of Fernández’s art naturally appeals to people of many cultures and faith traditions, it is clear that she approaches her work from a Latina, Catholic perspective. Through her work, Fernández opens the door for engagement related to immigration and other social justice issues.

About the Artist Sandra C. Fernández

I am a Latina who was born in Queens, New York, and grew up in Quito, Ecuador. My art is the record of my personal experience as an immigrant, mother, and Latina. I understand all art to be a personal aesthetic mediation. Mine includes a prolonged engagement with pain and deracination but also with pleasure, self-fulfillment and community engagement. Like most humans I have experienced trauma, loss, and loneliness, as well as the intense love of community and family. My art has sought to capture these feelings throughout my life using various techniques and materials.

My work during the last few years has reflected issues related to migration across the border with Mexico into the U.S. As a Latina who lived in Texas for many years, I was constantly exposed to both the lived experience and the rhetoric about “illegal migration.” I often came across the undocumented: on the streets; in stores; in entire neighborhoods in Austin, where Spanish was the only language spoken or understood. As I have traveled throughout the country to many major cities, I have realized that populations of this kind exist everywhere. These encounters have influenced my latest work, which explores the phenomenological aesthetics of the undocumented.

BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES: JONATHAN HOMRIGHAUSEN

"Illuminating Abraham: The Saint John’s Bible and Jewish-Christian Dialogue"
March 04, 2016, 12:00 - 1:00pm

Jonathan Homrighausen - MA Student, Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University and CARE Fall 2015 Grant Awardee

In 1998, the Benedictine monks of Saint John’s Abbey and University in Minnesota commissioned an illuminated Bible manuscript to celebrate the new millennium, The Saint John’s Bible. One unique aspect of The Saint John’s Bible is its effort to include current Jewish-Christian dialogue in its theological vision.

This Brown Bag lunch will analyze selected New Testament illuminations relevant to this dialogue. Reading the art as visual exegesis of scripture, we will look at specific illuminations in relation to the Jewishness of Jesus and Paul, polemic against “the Jews,” and supersessionism. While The Saint John’s Bible as a whole astounds in its openness to dialogue with Judaism, some of its illuminations contain the possibility of anti-Jewish polemic.

CARE’s Brown Bag Lunch Series: Informal presentations by GTU students, faculty, and staff. Hosted the first Friday of each month from 12 - 1pm - bring your sack lunch!
GTU Commencement
May 12, 4pm, PLTS
Chapel of the Cross

CIS Visiting Scholar Carol Bier served as a consultant for an exhibition on "Symmetry and Islamic Art" at the Hawaii State Library in Honolulu, curated by staff at Doris Duke's home at Shangri La, now a museum of Islamic art. Carol will present public programs in March at both institutions.

Congratulations Carol!

Congratulations to GTU PhD student and Fulbright scholar, Waqas Sajjad, who will be presenting the following papers:

"Characterizations of South Asian Islam in British India - Implications of Sufi Lines of Divide"
MESAAS Graduate Student Conference, Columbia University, February 25-26, 2016

"Barelvi Identity and the Mawlid - Ahmed Raza Khan and his Opponents to Contemporary Pakistan"
13th Annual South Asian Graduate Student Conference, University of Chicago, March 3-4, 2016

Dr. Munir Jiwa will be in conversation with CDSP President and Dean Mark Richardson on:
Unpacking Islamophobia: What Christians Should Know about Islam
March 3, 7:45pm, Tucson Common Room, CDSP Campus

The Center for Islamic Studies if pleased to be a co-sponsor of Zaytuna College’s 3rd Annual Conference on Higher Education
Revisiting Al-Ghazali: Reason and Revelation
March 4-5, Zaytuna College, 2401 Le Conte Ave, more info: www.zaytuna.edu

CIS NEWS AND EVENTS

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Dr. Munir Jiwa will be making a series of presentations in Tokyo, Japan, including:
Framing Islam/Muslims
March 8, Sophia University

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Congratulations to Sr. Marianne Farina, Professor at DSPT who will be a featured speaker.

2016 Russell Family Research Fellowship Conference and Lecture

Russell Fellowship Lecture, Thursday April 14, 7-9pm (Free and Open to the Public)

“The redemption of science (via the naturalization of teleology)” by Terrence W. Deacon, Professor of Biological Anthropology, UC Berkeley.

Russell Fellowship Conference Saturday, April 16, 12-5pm (Registration Required, Lunch NOT Provided)

“Steps to a metaphysics of incompleteness” by Terrence Deacon & Tyrone Cashman

Respondents: Brian Green, Joshua Moritz, Carol Trabing, Adam Pryor, and Mariusz Tabaczek

For more information or to register, please contact Melissa Moritz, melissam@ctns.org

PACIFIC COAST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING, “THEOLOGY OF ANIMALS”

You are cordially invited to attend the Spring Meeting of the Pacific Coast Theological Society (PCTS) on Friday, April 1 from 1:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturday, April 2 from 9 a.m.-noon in Classroom “B” at Church Divinity School of the Pacific.

The theme is the Theology of Animals and begins Friday afternoon with a paper by Marilyn Matavia (GTU), entitled “Welcoming Animals: Extending Christian Hospitality to Fellow Creatures” with Ann Woods (GTU) responding. This is followed by the paper by Purushottama Billimoria (GTU). Scott and Bartleby MacDougall (CDSP) will respond. Saturday morning, the paper entitled, “The Relation between Humans and Nonhuman Animals: Justice for Animals in Community with Humans according to the Biblical Tradition of Creation and Jewish Apocalypticism” by Herman Waetjen (SFTS) is discussed and Lisa Fullam (JST) is the respondent. Lastly, Mary Ashley (GTU) closes the Meeting with her paper, “In Communion with God’s Sparrow: Incorporating Animal Agency into Catholic Social Teaching” with Brian Green (SCL) responding. As is the custom of the Society, reading links are posted on the PCTS website (www.pcts.org/meetings/2015/Spring.html) and texts should be read ahead of time.

Free Public Lecture Friday Evening, April 1 at 7pm.

“Seeking a New Narrative for Christians and Muslims”—Daren Erisman (GTU) explores the overlapping Muslim and Christian narratives that have significantly shaped the world and continue to influence the events of today. Please join us Friday evening, April 1 at 7 p.m. in the Tucson Room at CDSP.

PCTS is a professional society dedicated to the exchange of views on topics germane to the theological endeavor. It has a long and distinguished history, and its founding pre-dates the establishment of the GTU. Membership is open to scholars and students interested in the theological endeavor broadly defined. Dues are $45 per academic year and $22.50 for students. Go to www.pcts.org for further information.
2016 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 12, 2016.

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 will select one Core Doctoral Faculty member to nominate for this award. Discussion may take place among doctoral students when they gather at the February and March area meetings, but opportunity should be provided for all students to participate in the selection through email. GTU MA students are invited to submit their suggestions for nominations to MA Program Coordinator Angela Muñoz who will forward them to the doctoral student area assistant in the relevant doctoral area of study.

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 18. 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.


WSR CAFÉ SERIES: ASHLEY BACCHI “WOMEN, PROPHECY & HELLENISTIC JUDAISM”

Please join the Women’s Studies in Religion for another exciting installment of our Cafe Series! GTU Alumna and WSR Certificate graduate Ashley Bacchi will present on Women, Prophecy and Hellenistic Judaism. This conversation will explore women, power, and prophecy in the Hellenistic world and how modern preconceptions of gender norms are challenged in Hellenistic Jewish texts. Exploring the Greek Sibyl as a Jewish pseudonym considers the impact of a female prophetic voice in a male dominated prophetic tradition. Questioning the standard gender narrative interpretations reconnects readers with the primary sources and explores what possibilities this opens for us today.

When: Thursday, March 3rd, 10:00am
Where: GTU Student Lounge, 1st Floor LeConte Building, 2465 LeConte Avenue Berkeley CA

WSR Certificate Students can earn 2 co-curricular units for attending.

WOMEN’S STUDIES IN RELIGION SPRING RECEPTION

Tuesday, March 29th, 4:30-5:30 pm., Richard S. Dinner Boardroom, GTU Library

This event brings together faculty, students, staff, and their families to enjoy refreshments and explore all the Women’s Studies certificate program has to offer.

We look forward to seeing you!
COFFEE WITH
THE PRESIDENT
March 9, 9:00-10:30am. The SAC invites you to come enjoy morning and conversation with GTU President Riess Potteryveld in his office on the 3rd floor of the GTU Library.

ROBERT BENEDETTO RETIRES AS DIRECTOR OF GTU LIBRARY

After a decade of devoted service as Director of the GTU’s Flora Lamson Hewlett Library, Robert Benedetto retired at the end of February.

Benedetto came to the Graduate Theological Union in July of 2006, bringing with him nearly thirty years of professional experience as a librarian, church historian, and archivist. Under his leadership, the GTU library has expanded its online databases, provided wireless internet access in the library, improved its online course management system, created multiple points of access to digitized material from Special Collections, and streamlined its operations. To address the library’s growing collection of books and special materials, off-site storage was expanded to include American Baptist Seminary of the West and the library at Santa Clara University (SCU). In addition, a cooperative arrangement was established with SCU to allow GTU students access to its library.

GTU President Riess Potteryveld celebrated Benedetto’s contributions during his time as director: “The GTU library and its exhibition spaces are key resources for GTU’s faculty and students, and serve the University of California community of scholars as well. In a time of financial challenges, Robert has devoted himself to maintaining the quality and depth of our collections. We are grateful for his effort to keep the Library aligned with the academic programs introduced by our many schools and affiliates over the years.”

Before coming to the GTU, Benedetto worked as director of special collections at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey, and as associate librarian and associate professor of bibliography at Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Education in Richmond, Virginia. He has also served as an archivist with the Presbyterian Historical Society in Montgomery, NC, and the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, HI.

Benedetto holds a master’s degree in library science from the University of Hawaii, a master’s in church history from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and bachelor’s degree from San Francisco State University. In 2013, he was a recipient of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary’s Distinguished Alumna/i Award for Excellence in Academia.

A prolific author, Benedetto has written more than 30 published articles, and has authored, edited, or contributed to 10 books. He was the general editor of The New Westminster Dictionary of Church History, Vol. 1: The Early, Medieval, and Reformation Eras (Westminster John Knox Press, 2008) and the co-author (with Donald K. McKim) of Historical Dictionary of the Reformed Churches, 2nd edition (Scarecrow Press, 2010).

After retiring from the GTU, Benedetto anticipates a time of discernment as he thinks about new avenues of service. He expects to continue work on several writing projects, including his next book, Na Kahu: Portraits of Native Hawaiian Pastors, 1820–1900, to be published by University of Hawaii Press. “This writing, and whatever else I do, will certainly be enriched by my time at the GTU,” Benedetto reflected.

Clay-Edward Dixon, who currently serves as the Flora Lamson Hewlett Library’s Head of Technical Services and Collection Department, has been announced as Interim Director of the library.

SAC SPRING DOCTORAL STUDENT FORUM

“Family, Commitments, and Graduate School: Balancing Personal Life, Academics, and Religious Commitments,” a panel and open discussion with current PhD students. March 16, 3:30-4:30, GTU Student Lounge, 2465 Le Conte Avenue.

THESIS/DISSERTATION FILING DEADLINE FOR SPRING GRADUATION IS APRIL 1
CJS NEWS AND EVENTS

TUESDAY, MARCH 1st: “THE BAY AREA AS THE HUB OF NEW JEWISH RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND TRENDS” WITH YAAKOV ARIEL

12:45pm: 2465 Le Conte Avenue | HEDCO Room| Berkeley, CA 94709

The talk will explore a number of New Religious Movements that came about in the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1960s-1970. These include: the San Francisco Zen Center, the House of Love and Prayer, Chabad House, the Aquarian Minyan, and Jews for Jesus. It will examine the role of San Francisco in allowing such movements to come about, the manner they operated, and the ways such groups provided paradigms for other centers and locals and further influenced the spiritual life in America of both Jews and non-Jews.

TUESDAY, MARCH 8TH: IS THERE A JEWISH MYTHOLOGY? WITH HOWARD SCHWARTZ

12:45pm: 2465 Le Conte Avenue | HEDCO Room| Berkeley, CA 94709

At first glance, it might not seem to exist. After all, the central principle of Judaism is monothelism, and how can there be a mythology where there is only one God? But a closer examination of Judaism reveals a great many of the hallmarks of mythology, including a heaven populated not only by God and the angels, but by other divine figures, including the Bride of God and the Messiah. In this lecture, drawn from his book, Tree of Souls: The Mythology of Judaism, Howard Schwartz will weigh the evidence for and against the view that Judaism has its own extensive mythological tradition.

LIBRARY NEWS AND EVENTS

More online and electronic resources at the library…

Library help guides are now available online! Our new ‘LibGuides,’ providing custom help on a variety of subject areas and research topics, are easily accessible from the library home page. We will be adding more content throughout the semester; if you don’t find help on the topic you’re looking for, feel free to contact a librarian directly at libref@gtu.edu. Additionally, the library now offers free scanning to email from library photocopiers, allowing you to freely scan your document and email it to yourself.

Congratulations to Demitrius Burnett, M. Div. candidate at PSR! Demitrius is the winner of an Amazon gift card drawing in the recent library survey sent to faculty and students. A big thank you to all the students and faculty members who took the time to fill out the survey; your feedback is valuable and appreciated.

The current library art exhibit features Pan-Asian Hindu Art from the Collection of the GTU Center for Dharma Studies, as well as objects from SFTS and GTU Special Collections. Next time you are in the library, stop by to see this beautiful exhibit.

If you missed the annual Reading of the Sacred Texts lecture on February 25, not to worry. A video recording of the lecture will be available on the library website in the near future.

PLTS CO-SPONSORS WEBINAR ON ENERGY STEWARDSHIP

PLTS students and guests in Prof. Moe-Lobeda’s "Earth Ethics as Justice Ethics" class participated in a webinar about energy stewardship.

The two-part webinar, entitled "Energy Stewardship for Seminarians," was presented by the Rev. Fletcher Harper of Green-Faith.

For links to the webinar: http://www.plts.edu/news/?id=12212
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.

HONORABLE MENTION

MA STUDENTS

Thesis Successfully Defended
Thomas Calobrisi, IBS*
Cara Levin, CJS
Paula Thompson, CIS
*with Honors

PHD STUDENTS

Comprehensive Proposal Approved
Scott Spitzer, HIST
Raphael Okitafumba, ETHC

Oral Comprehensive Exams Passed
Aline Gram, SPRT
Justin Staller, SPRT

Advanced to Candidacy
Dante Quick, THEO

Dissertation Successfully Defended
Lahnunzira Bungsut, BIBL
Sheri Prud’Homme, IDS
Pui Fong Wong, SPRT
Robert Erisman, THEO