GTU

GTU Dean's Newsletter



At the very least, I'd had a room with a view while attending the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) and the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) in San Diego. I could feel glorious sunshine just outside my window as boats and pint-sized people moved about the marina. Every year, one week prior to Thanksgiving, the world's largest gathering of scholars and students of religion, scriptures, and theology takes place. With over 10,000 attendees, more than 1,200 meetings, tours, and workshops, and more than 130 publishers presenting their latest books, this convention more or less acted like the "Burning Man" for religious scholarship. As usual, the GTU was well represented with more than a hundred GTU-affiliated names appearing on the

program. Normally, I would fully partake in the festivities, going to meetings, networking, and spending hours in the exhibition halls – but not this year. I spent most of my time in a hotel room. I was to take part in two panels, but as I was unprepared to give my remarks by the time I got to San Diego, I was stuck staring at a computer screen.

However, I made sure not to miss the GTU alumni reception.

Nearly three hundred people came in and out to reconnect with old friends, make new ones, and say hello to former professors or students. At the centerpiece of the reception was the presentation of the Alum of the Year award to Debra Mumford of '07¹. I also announced the winner of the third annual Borsch-Rast Book Prize, Virginia Burrus, for her work *Ancient Christian Ecopoetics: Cosmologies, Saints, Things.*²

While trapped in my room, an epiphany of sorts occurred to me. An obvious insight came to my view in a forceful way, like something suddenly appearing out of my blind spot. While preparing for one of my responses, I realized that I had been making some assumptions in the classroom I no longer accept. I had been using a handout created when I was a doctoral student for twenty years in my courses. While my hermeneutical strategy has evolved and continues to evolve, I've kept the same handout through it all.

I plan to make changes. And that is a big deal; as you know, we don't care for changing our handouts.

Willi

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

1-https://www.gtu.edu/news/celebrating-alumna-year-debra-j-mumford

2- https://www.gtu.edu/news/virginia-burrus-phd-91-awarded-10000-borsch-rast-book-prize



From the Associate Dean of Director of new Interreligious **Event**: Listening Forum with GTU Board of Trustees, moderated by Dean Kim. 4 Borsch-Rast Book Prize and Lectureship Winner 5 Library News 6 Chan Essay Winner......6 Student Travel Grant Winners Fall 2019.....6 **Distinguished Faculty Lecture** Video Online!7 CARe Events 8 CDS News9 CLGS Events 10 GTU Holiday Food Drive10 Honorable Mentions 11



From the Associate Dean of Students

January Biblical Hebrew and Greek Exams

Register for the Biblical Hebrew and Greek language exams by **Friday**, **December 13.** Contact the GTU Academic Programs Coordinator Fredonia Thompson at <u>fthompson@gtu.edu</u>.

- **Biblical Hebrew exam**, Wednesday, January 8, 2020, at 9am—12:00pm
- **Greek exam,** Thursday, January 9, 2020, at 9am–12:00pm

Intent to Graduate forms

GTU MA and PhD students who intend to graduate in Spring 2020 must submit the online *Intent to Graduate* form to the Fredonia Thompson, GTU Academic Programs Coordinator, by **Wednesday**, **January 15.**

Forms are available on the website at <u>https://</u> www.gtu.edu/students/gtu-commencement

Email <u>fthompson@gtu.edu</u> with any questions.

Mid-Year Orientation for First Year Doctoral Students

There will be a <u>required</u> mid-year "orientation" for doctoral students who started in the program during fall semester 2019. The orientation will be **Wednesday, January 22, from 12:30 to 2:00pm** in the Dinner Board room. A tasty lunch will be provided!

February Doctoral Council

The deadline for submitting dissertation proposals for the Spring Doctoral Council is **Monday, January 27, 2020.** Please submit dissertations proposals to GTU Academic Programs Coordinator, Fredonia Thompson.

Email <u>fthompson@gtu.edu</u> with any questions.

Brown Bag Lunch with the GTU President

Wednesday, December 18th at 12:30pm in the President's Office

Come and get to know President Danny Lehmann during our information Brown Bag Lunches! Please bring your lunch and join Danny for informal conversations in the President's Office.

2020 CALL FOR PAPERS

The **Berkeley Journal of Religion and Theology** (BJRT) is the peer-reviewed journal of the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley. The mission of the BJRT is to be an international and diverse forum of original, cutting-edge scholarship in religious studies, philosophy, and theology that reflects the GTU's endeavor to be a nexus for "where religion meets the world."

To this end, the editors of the BJRT invite scholars from various backgrounds and institutions to submit articles and book reviews for inclusion into the journal. The BJRT strongly encourages creative scholarship from different religious and theological traditions and methods that reflects the mission of the BJRT. The deadline for submissions for the next issue (Vol. 6, no. 1) is: **March 1, 2020**

Instructions for Submissions and Style Guide for authors and reviewers are available on the BJRT website (**bjrt.gtu.edu**). For more information, please e-mail the managing editor at: **bjrt@ses.gtu.edu**

GTU

Director of Interreligious Chaplaincy Program



GTU Announces Dr. Kamal Abu-Shamsieh as Director of Interreligious Chaplaincy Program

building a truly unique and compelling program."

Dr. Kamal Abu-Shamsieh

The Graduate Theological Union is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Kamal Abu-Shamsieh as Director of the new Interreligious **Chaplaincy Program and Lecturer in Practical** Theology. The founder and director of Ziraya Muslim Spiritual Care, Dr. Abu-Shamsieh has extensive international experience in primarily Arab and Muslim countries as a trainer for spiritual-care providers, and has served since 2012 as a relief chaplain at Stanford Hospital and Clinics. He completed his PhD in Practical Theology and Islamic Studies (with a focus on chaplaincy) at the GTU earlier this year, and also holds a Certificate in Palliative Care Chaplaincy from California State University Institute for Palliative Care, an MA in Islamic Studies and Muslim-Christian Relations and a Graduate Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy from Hartford Seminary, and a BA in Linguistics and Translations from Birziet University.

GTU President Rabbi Daniel Lehmann celebrated Abu-Shamsieh's hiring: "We are thrilled that Dr. Kamal Abu-Shamsieh, a GTU graduate and a highly skilled and beloved chaplain, will be the inaugural director of our new interreligious chaplaincy program. Kamal brings a deep commitment to the field of interreligious chaplaincy both as a scholar and practitioner. His wealth of experience locally, nationally, and globally as an entrepreneurial pioneer in Muslim chaplaincy and his passion for interreligious engagement will prove invaluable in

The new chaplaincy program is designed to equip chaplains with the skills and interreligious understanding to meet the spiritual and religious needs of increasingly diverse populations, while also offering expertise in religious traditions that have traditionally been underrepresented among institutional chaplains. Students can earn a Certificate in Interreligious Chaplaincy, while also pursuing an MA in Islamic, Jewish, or Hindu Studies. Coursework will incorporate practical pastoral skills, interfaith training, and classes on counseling, chaplaincy models and methods, and spiritual care, all designed to prepare students to be eligible for certified chaplaincy. The certificate program will also be open to students who have previously earned a qualifying master's degree.

Dr. Abu-Shamsieh declared that he was "thrilled to return to the GTU, a place that is deeply affirming of religious identity, respectful of diversity, and committed to pluralism and dialogue." He continued, "The Interreligious Chaplaincy program will prepares students of Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu traditions for careers in spiritual care where they are grounded in their faith and competent to care for diverse communities. The impact of this program, and the work of the leaders it will train, will be felt locally and internationally."

Dr. Kamal Abu-Shamsieh will begin his new position as director of the GTU's Interreligious Chaplaincy Program on December 2. For more information on how you can apply to become part of the initial cohort of students entering the program in Fall 2020, contact **admissions@gtu.edu.**



Listening Forum with GTU Board of Trustees Moderated By Dean Uriah Kim



Listening Forum Thursday, December 5, 2019 from 4:00-5:30pm in the Dinner Boardroom in the GTU Library

Listening with Open Minds and Hearts

By Susan Cook Hoganson, GTU Board Chair

The Graduate Theological Union has always been an institution and a community that prides itself on fostering trust and thriving in an environment rich in difference.

Differences of religious belief.

Differences in cultural background.

Differences in political persuasion and opinion.

And of course, many, many more.

In this way, and in a spirit resonant with the design of our logo, one could describe the GTU as a magnificent kaleidoscope bringing together many different pieces, parts, shapes, and colors to create a beautiful, yet ever-changing portrait. The members of the Board of Trustees and I recognize that recent changes at the GTU have caused some in our community to feel that the various pieces of our kaleidoscope are not coming together as comfortably as they have in the past. We acknowledge that there are those who feel hurt and pain; those who feel they are searching for a voice to express their feelings; and those who may wonder whether anyone would be listening, if they shared their perspectives.

To any and all among our GTU faculty and student body, allow me to say: We hear you, and we are listening.

With open minds and hearts, I would like to extend an open invitation to join me and other members of the GTU's Board of Trustees for a Listening Forum moderated by Dean Uriah Kim on **Thursday, December 5, 2019**, from 4-5:30pm in the Dinner Boardroom in the GTU Library, a time and day we chose deliberately and especially in hopes that it would accommodate as many schedules as possible.

We look forward to listening and learning from your many voices. The floor is yours.



Virginia Burrus (PhD, 91) Awarded \$10,000 Borsch-Rast Book Prize



GTU Announces Winner of \$10,000 Borsch-Rast Book Prize, Dr. Virginia Burrus (PhD, 91)

Dr. Burrus's receipt of the award was announced by GTU Dean Uriah Kim on November 23, 2019, at the GTU Alumni Reception during the 2019 Annual Meetings of the American Academy of Religion and Society for Biblical Literature in San Diego. Dr. Bernard Adeney-Risakota (PhD, '82) of the Insdonesian Consortium for Religious Studies at Universitas Gadjah Mada was awarded an honorable mention for his book, *Living in a Sacred Cosmos: Indonesia and the Future of Islam* (CSEAS, Yale University).

Virginia Burrus will present on themes from her award-winning book at the GTU's Third Annual Borsch-Rast Book Lecture on **Thursday, March 19, 2020**. A response will be offered by fellow GTU alum Douglas Christie (PhD, '88), Professor and Chair of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University.

Created to encourage innovative scholarship by GTU alumni and faculty, the Borsch-Rast Book Prize is funded by an endowment stemming 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).

The Graduate Theological Union will begin accepting nominations of 2019 monographs written by GTU faculty and alumni for the next Borsch-Rast Book Prize and Lectureship on January 1, 2020. Visit **gtu.edu/academics/borsch-rast-prizelectureship** for more on the Borsch-Rast Book Prize and Lectureship, including contest guidelines, the nominations form, and information about past recipients and lectures.

Dr. Virginia Burrus

The Graduate Theological Union is pleased to announce that Dr. Virginia Burrus (MA, 1984; PhD, 1991), the Bishop W. Earl Ledden Professor of Religion at Syracuse University and the GTU's 2017 Alumna of the Year, has been awarded the third annual Borsch-Rast Book Prize and Lectureship for her 2018 book, *Ancient Christian Ecopoetics: Cosmologies, Saints, Things* (University of Pennsylvania Press). Established in 2016, the Borsch-Rast Book Prize is awarded annually to encourage innovative and creative theological scholarship by GTU graduates and current faculty and carries a prize of \$10,000.

In her award-winning book, Virginia Burrus considers what insights ancient Christianity might contribute to contemporary reflection on the looming ecological crisis. Speaking on behalf of the awards committee, former GTU dean Arthur Holder noted that the questions Burrus raises about humanity's place within the cosmos are "both perennial and urgent." Holder celebrated the author's inclusion of diverse conversation partners from the ancient world and a "dizzying array of interdisciplinary theories." He added, "Virginia Burrus's work represents the best of what we have come to expect from GTU graduates: rethinking traditions with a critical eye and a loving heart for the sake of making the world a better placeor, in this case, daring to hope that in the future there will be a world at all.



Library News

REDUCED Library Hours:

<u>December 14 – 20:</u>

Monday: 8:30am - 5pm Tuesday: 8:30am - 5pm Wednesday: 8:30am - 5pm Thursday: 8:30am - 5pm Friday: 8:30am - noon Saturday: CLOSED Sunday: CLOSED The GTU Library will be CLOSED: December 21 – 31, 2019

Brianna Deutsch Awarded \$2,500 Chan Essay Prize

On behalf of the Core Doctoral Faculty Awards Committee, the Dean is pleased to announce **Brianna Deutsch** is the winner of this year's 2019 Chan Essay contest for her paper entitled "Fatal Flaws and Female Subversion: Pharaoh and Women across the Bible and Qur'an." The amount of the award is \$2,500. Congratulations, Brianna!

Student Travel Grant Winners – Fall 2019

Students who have papers accepted for the program of the Annual Meeting of the AAR, SBL, or other comparable national meeting or conference may compete in the **GTU's Student Travel Grant competition**. Winners are given cash awards to support the costs of attending the meeting. The Dean and Core Doctoral Faculty Awards Committee select recipients for this award. The Dean is happy to announce grant recipients for this semester are:

Keng Fan Chan	Sheryl Johnson	Hyung-Joo Lee	Carrie Sealine
Laura Dunn	Beena Poulouse Kalley	Leonard McMahon	Laura Jean Torgerson
Leigh Ann Hildebrand	Mariala	Daniel Moceri	
ппаергана	Mariska Lauterboom	Pravina Rodrigues	Olga Yunak



Center for Islamic Studies (CIS)

CIS is delighted to share that **Carol Bier** will be presenting a lecture sponsored by the Society for Asian Art, titled, "Sufism, Beauty, Love: Ecstasy and Rapture of Islam in Asia."

Friday, Dec 6, 2019, 10:30am - 12:30pm

State Building, Milton Marks Auditorium, 455 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco

More info: <u>https://www.societyforasianart.org/</u> <u>programs/arts-asia-lecture-series/arts-asia-fall-2019-</u> <u>seeking-divine-lesser-known-religious</u>

Carol has also prepared a Study Guide for this lecture available upon request.

Congratulations to **Mahjabeen Dhala** who will be speaking via Skype at the Second Muslim Unity Conference (Northern California Islamic Council) to be held on **Saturday, Dec 7, 2019** in San Jose, and at the Development and Relief Foundation in Houston, Texas on the same day.

CIS is delighted to host an interactive gallery program, titled, **"Islamic Aesthetics: Said Nuseibeh's Photographs of Isfahani Architecture,"** based on his exhibition of 17 photographs of Isfahan's monumental architecture at the Bade Museum on the campus of the Pacific School of Religion.

Monday, Dec 9, 2019, at 4 - 7:30pm, Bade Museum. Discussions led by Carol Bier and Said Nuseibeh followed by a reception. All welcome. More info: <u>https://www.gtu.edu/events</u> Contact: <u>mdhala@gtu.edu</u>

THE 44TH ANNUAL DISTINGUISHED FACULTY LECTURE **VIDEO AVAILABLE!**

The GTU's 44th Annual Distinguished Faculty Lecture, given by Dr. Munir Jiwa, Associate Professor of Islamic Studies and Anthropology and Founding Director of the Center for Islamic Studies, was presented on Tuesday, November 12th, 2019.

Dr. Jiwa's lecture entitled **"Liberal Inclusion or Liberal Conversion?** Islamophilia, Islamophobia, and Islamic Studies in Interreligious Contexts" is available online at:



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HZJuZ9VR9k&feature=youtu.be

This video includes Dr. Jiwa's lecture and the response given by Dr. Dorsey Blake, Faculty Associate of the Pacific School of Religion.

Enjoy!



XGTU

Center for the Arts & Religion Events (CARe)

Unless otherwise noted, all CARe events take place in the Doug Adams Gallery, located on the first floor of 2465 LeConte Ave., Berkeley.

Trip to BAMPFA with Thomas Cattoi

Wednesday, December 4 | 4:30PM | BAMPFA 2155 Center St. Berkeley

Every Third Thursday of the month, gather in the lobby of the Berkeley Art Museum and Film Archive to receive complimentary museum admission and to hear a short lecture on a current exhibition by GTU staff, faculty and students.

December's talk is given by Dr. Thomas Cattoi (JST) on the exhibition *Divine Women, Divine Wisdom*, which displays art from South Asia and the Himalayan region that celebrates the beauty, fecundity, wisdom, power, and compassion of women within the context of Hindu and Buddhist traditions.

Brown Bag Lunch with Chris Renz

Friday, December 6 | 12-1PM | Doug Adams Gallery

CARe's Brown Bag Lunch Series features presentations by recent CARe/GTU grant recipients, students, faculty, and staff. These are informal presentations, so please bring your sack lunch! Free & open to the public.

Our November talk will be given by Fr. Chris Renz, O.P. of the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology. In Spring 2019, Fr. Renz received a CARe grant to interview Morris Drexler for an ongoing research project on William Blase Schauer, O.P. and the Las Cruces Experiment.

Prior to Vatican Council II, Fr. Schauer was already formulating ideas for a unique and revolutionary liturgy program that was eventually called "Liturgy in Santa Fe." He began to implement these ideas while at the Newman Center in Las Cruces, NM. Through the lens of "symbol, season, and heritage," Fr. Schauer used fine arts to educate college students about Catholic worship and culture. Morris Drexler is one of the few persons alive who was a student during this time, working closely with Fr. Schauer to create hundreds of hours of audio recordings, photos, and videos. This talk explores Drexler's unique insights into the early thinking of Fr. Schauer.

Beyond Words Closes

Friday, December 13

Our Fall '19 exhibition closes this month! Don't miss your chance to see contemporary works by Mohamad Hafez, Meg Hitchcock and David Maxim, artists whose work takes its inspiration from the holy texts of the world's religions.

Mohamad Hafez, inspired by the Qur'an, creates intricately detailed 3D works, reflecting the political turmoil in the Middle East through the compilation of found objects, paint and scrap metal. He creates surrealistic Middle Eastern streetscapes emblazoned with Qur'anic calligraphy as spray painted acts of revolutionary protest. Meg Hitchcock takes her inspiration from a wide range of source material, cutting out letters and combining them to create intricate designs. By recombining the holy texts of diverse religions, her work animates the commonalities woven through all scripture. David Maxim, a San Francisco-based artist, creates monumental "constructed pictures" that illustrate stories and passages from the Old and New Testaments. Seeing the Bible as a tremendous source of theatre, his works incorporate sculptural elements, made from crossbeams, pulleys, ropes and hinges, alluding to the hidden workings of stagecraft. Finally, Eleanor Creekmore Dickinson, a Beat -era, Bay Area-based artist, committed to figure drawing, gives us life-sized reproductions of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Reimagining the pairs' care-free days, pre-expulsion, Dickinson gives a refreshing portrayal of a story that so often focuses on the Fall.

Together, these works show that sacred texts are still alive. Taking the viewer beyond the words read on a page, the artwork in this exhibition brings to life ancient stories and shows the inspirational lifeforce still at work in these great writings.



Center for Dharma Studies (CDS)

CDS AAR 2019 Presentations

Congratulations to **Laura Dunn** who will be presenting "Reenchanting the Body: Modern-Day Asceticism of Ashtanga Yoga." For the *New Approaches to Asceticism Exploratory Group*. Laura also received a CARe grant for Research trip to Ganeshpuri, India in January 2020, the GTU travel grant for a presentation at the AAR and was elected Steering Committee Chair for the AAR exploratory unit "Critical Studies in Asceticism." She will also be teaching modules for "Introduction to World Religions" at the Windward Community College at the University of Hawaii.

Congratulations to **Rachelle Syed** who was awarded the Ida J. Thornton and Distinguished Scholars Award towards her participation in RA-4190, *Embodied Ecofeminism and the Arts* in Hawaii during intersession 2020.

Congratulations to **Aaron Grizzell** who presented "The New Animism" for the *Art/s of Interpretation Group*, Theme: Science, Symbol, and Society: Epistemological Reassessments Session One: The Situation, at the AAR in San Diego.

Congratulations to **Pravina Rodrigues** who presented "The Semiotics of Sefirot and Śrīcakra: A Reflection on Sacred Geometry" for the *Dharma Academy of North America (DANAM)*, Theme: Hindu-Jewish Studies: Tantra and Kabbalah, at the AAR in San Diego.

Congratulations to **Cogen Bohanec** who will be teaching "Asian Humanities," and "Classical Humanities" at American River College in the Spring semester 2020. **Graham Schweig, Distinguished Research and Teaching Fellow**, convened the panel "Transregional Bhakti Traditions" at the *Dharma Academy of North America* (DANAM), Theme: Transnational Devotional Theologies & Praxes, and presented "The Ubiquity and Scarcity of Pure Love: A Constructivist Comparative Analysis of Krishna Premā in the *Bhāgavata Purāņa* and in Chaitanya Theology," at the *Dharma Academy of North America* (DANAM) Theme: Subjectivity, Emotions, and Feelings, "Sacrifice in Christian and Vaiṣṇava Scriptures" for the *Society of Hindu-Christian Studies*, Theme: Violence: Its Justifications and Role in the Spiritual Life, at the AAR in San Diego.

Dr. Rita Sherma presented "The Ecological Ethics of Deep Immanence" for the *Religion and Ecology Unit,* Theme: Focus on Sustainability - Anticipatory Directions in Hindu Dharma and Earth Ethics for the Anthropocene, "Liberative Strategies from Gustavo Gutiérrez and Mahatma Gandhi" for the *Society of Hindu-Christian Studies,* Theme: Violence: Its Justifications and Role in the Spiritual Life, and convened "Dharma & Artificial Intelligence Double Session" for the *Dharma Academy of North America* (DANAM) and *Hindu Approaches to Spiritual Care: Chaplaincy in Theory and Practice* Edited by Vineet Chander, Princeton Univ. & Lucinda Mosher, Hartford Seminary.

DANAM-AAR 2019 Book Launch - In Conjunction with the Society for Hindu-Christian Studies. She also participated in "Raise Your Voice with Power: A Gathering of American Values, Religious Voices Letter Writers" at the AAR in San Diego.



The Center for LGBTQ and Gender Studies in Religion (CLGS)

December Events

5 December 2019: CLGS Jewish Roundtable Queeries Series

Rabbi Abby Stein, Transgender author, activist, blogger, model, and speaker 6:30PM PSR Campus 10 December 2019: CLGS Lavender Lunch with David Kundtz and Bernie Schlager Book discussion: Ministry Among God's Queer Folk: LGBTQ Pastoral Care 12:00 noon to 1:15PM | Small Dining Room, PSR's D'Autremont Hall

Celebrate the Holiday Season by Giving to the Alameda County Community Food Bank

For more information, please contact Caryl Woulfe at <u>cwoulfe@gtu.edu</u>. You can also visit **accfb.org** to donate online to help buy items that can't be collected in barrels, like milk, meat, eggs, and fresh produce.

Please give generously to support those in need. Thank you for your support! #GTUGives





Honorable Mentions

<u>Comprehensive Proposal</u> <u>Approved</u>

May T. Kosba, HCSR Clifton Huffmaster, HIST

Oral Comprehensive Passed

Woori Han, REPR Marvin L. Wiser, BIBL Ismael Ruiz Abaunza, ETHC

Advanced To Candidacy

Ken Fan Chan, REPR Amanda DeJointville, ART Nicole De Leon, ART Lee Sanghyun, THEO Laura Jean Torgerson, IDS



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: Melissa Haddick, Executive Assistant to the Dean's Office, mhaddick@gtu.edu

GTU Office of the Dean

2400 Ridge Road Berkeley, CA 94709 www.gtu.edu

Phone: 510-649-2442