



GTU DEAN'S NEWSLETTER



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The GTU mission statement declares our commitment to "building a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world." With Election Day upon us, how do we stand by that promise?

In 2020, voting – like so many things – has been upended by the pandemic. We've seen expanded opportunities for voting by mail, polling stations replaced by ballot boxes, and options for early voting. At the same time, we've seen attempts to hobble these very efforts. Mail sorting machines were dismantled, some large and populous counties were limited to a single ballot box, and many states require in-person voting despite pandemic dangers.

These voter suppression efforts are infuriating and dispiriting; however, the responses of voters have been anything but. Across the country, people arrived before sunrise to get in line. They brought lawn chairs and snacks to bide the time. They devoted hours, waiting for their turn to cast their ballots. These voters embody resilience and hope.

In recent years, we have experienced so much that is wrong, but we have also witnessed voices, powerful in unity, rising in opposition to those negative forces. Thanks to those persistent voters for leading by example.

Elizabeth SPer

Elizabeth S. Peña, PhD Interim Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs





HTTPS://WWW.CITYOFBERKELEY.INFO/FLUSHOT/

BERKELEY FREE CLINIC 2339 DURANT AVENUE BERKELEY PHONE:(510) 548-2570 <u>HTTP://WWW.BERKELEYFREECLINIC.ORG/</u>



NOVEMBER PDP WORKSHOPS

NOVEMBER 4, 2020, 10 AM

How to Prepare Conference Presentations?

Facilitated by Dr. Rita Sherma

NOVEMBER 18, 2020, 10 AM

Importance of Networking

Facilitated by Dr. Elizabeth Peña

All workshops will be held on Zoom Zoom ID: 978 6840 4257

RSVP: cmotupalli@gtu.edu

<u>tps://www.gtu.edu/students/professional-developmen</u>





Reminder: we're on Pacific Standard Time (PST) now!

At 2am on November 1, we turned back the clocks one hour at GTU home base in California. Most of the U.S. did likewise, with the exception of Hawaii and most of Arizona.

For our international students and others who are joining class remotely from afar, please note! Europe already started daylight savings, so we are catching up; Asia and Africa do not change clocks. For many, this means that there will be an hour difference in your usual class time. For example, Beijing remains at UTC +8 and Cairo at UTC +2, while California is now at UTC -8.

COVID News Update

As eager as we are to be together again, we must continue to take precautions to safeguard our community's health and well-being. To that end, **GTU instruction will continue to rely on remote modalities for Spring 2021**. This decision was not made lightly, but in consultation with GTU leadership and the COVID-19 Response Team, as well as with the guidance of health officers from Alameda County and the City of Berkeley.

Please click here for more information and helpful resources.



Dear all,

It is with a heavy heart that I write to share the news about the passing of our fellow colleague, doctoral student, and friend to so many, Carrie Sealine. Carrie was in the fifth year of her doctoral work in our department, specializing in the New Religious Movements concentration, and prior to that, she had completed an MA in Jewish Studies at CJS.

Carrie was a regular fixture for so many of us at different talks and colloquiums, always showing up, and always keen to engage in dialogue and ask questions (and/or, to demonstrate a ritual from the tradition of Thelemic Magick, which she studied and so



enthusiastically loved to share about). In 2019, Carrie organized a great GTU conference on "New Religions at the Graduate Theological Union: Theories, Practices, and People" which many in our department were involved in. Even though she was already then dealing with her cancer struggle, she participated and was actively involved in every step of that event: a testament to her strength and intellectual chutzpah.

Please keep Carrie and her family in your best thoughts and prayers. She was a generous spirit and friend to so many, and I'd like to close this sad announcement with some comforting words from Carrie herself. She wrote these words privately as succor for a friend during tough times in the early stages of the pandemic, and yet they ring true and louder now, more than ever; I am grateful that Jessica McFarland has given me permission to share them as we mourn together Carrie's transition:

"That the days are becoming indistinguishable from each other is a sign of eternity. The new world isn't that of waiting for the old order to reopen or the old economy to restart. It's to realize that the messianic age begins when we see that the essential labor is to love and feed each other and to revel in the feeling of endless resurrection when we wake up and have nothing to do that we don't have to do that we don't have to do unless we choose it and choose it in love."

In sadness and solidarity,

Dr. Devin Zuber Chair, Department for Historical and Cultural Studies of Religion

Visit the Memorial page for Carrie on the Center for Jewish Studies website.



Distinguished Faculty Lecture

Haciendo Memoria: Revisiting our Blessings at the GTU

Wednesday, November 11, 6:30pm



<u>RSVP here!</u>

The Graduate Theological Union is pleased to announce that **Dr. Eduardo Fernández, S.J.**, will be recognized as the 2020 Distinguished Faculty Lecturer on November 11, 2020.

Each November, the GTU faculty honors a distinguished professor who embodies the scholarly standards, teaching excellence, and commitment to ecumenism that define the GTU. Nominations are made by GTU

faculty and are then considered by the Council of Deans, which selects the lecturer.

Dr. Fernández is a professor of pastoral theology and ministry at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University. He specializes in Latino theology, Mexican and Southwestern history, social justice and enculturation and the celebration of the sacraments in multicultural contexts. In addition to teaching, he is part of the Wabash Center Race Critical Consciousness Colloquy.

The 45th annual Distinguished Faculty Lecture, titled, "**Haciendo Memoria: Revisiting Our Blessings at the GTU**," will include Dr. Fernández's reflections on both the blessings of our past as well as some dawning opportunities for the future.

"Despite the very challenging times in which we find ourselves, survivors remind us of the importance of looking back, taking in the big picture, and counting our blessings as together we envision a new tomorrow," Dr. Fernández said.

The lecture will take place via Zoom, and will be followed by a response from **Dr. Judith Berling**, who served as GTU Dean from 1987 to 1997 and is Professor Emeritus of Chinese and Comparative Religions.



Doctoral Graduates

October 2020

The following candidates are presented to the Board of Trustees of the GTU by the Dean and President of the GTU upon recommendation of the Core Doctoral Faculty for approval of the degree Doctor of Philosophy:

Paul Houston Blankenship

Soul Woundedness

Christian Spirituality

This dissertation is an ethnography about the spiritual lives of young adults who live on the streets of Seattle. It is based on more than three years of ethnographic fieldwork and it answers two related questions: what is spirituality like for young adults who live on the streets and what difference does it make in their everyday lives?

Cogen Bohanec

Process and Dialectic in Hindu Thought: Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Systematic Theology and Ethics

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Historical and Cultural Studies of Religion

This work contrasts the process metaphysics of the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava tradition against the substance ontology of classical logic. Energetic monism (*śakti*) implies a realism of metaphysical essences as the telos for a virtue-ethic, resonates with an ontology of ecofeminist and feminist care ethics, and involves a fact/value synthesis that attenuates a strong burden of proof for constructing a systematic ethic.

Ahmed Mahmoud Khater

The Development of Islamic Law in the West: The Legal Operational Principles of Western Fiqh Councils

This dissertation derives the legal operational principles used by the ECFR, FCNA, and AMJA. These councils give *fatwā* with classically held opinions, with contemporary scholars, by joining opinions via *talfīq*, by conducting their own *`ijtihād*, and by granting concessions via principles of need. A diverse sample of case studies is presented in this work.



Insoo Kim

Christological Dimensions of Spirituality and Praxis: A Journey for Rediscovering the Relationship of Doctrine with Spiritual Practice through Patristics and Contemporary Thought

Theology and Ethics

This dissertation explores the ontological valence of Chalcedonian Christology with spirituality and praxis, which rediscovers the relationship of doctrine with spiritual practice.

Aline Gram Lewis

Passionate Reading: The Spirituality of Reading and the Body of Christ in Augustine's Confessions, Teresa of Avila's La Vida, and Dorothy Day's Spiritual Autobiographies

Historical and Cultural Studies of Religion

This dissertation explores the relationship between spirituality and reading by looking at Augustine's, Teresa of Avila's, and Dorothy Day's stories about reading, and how the body of Christ features in these stories. It examines how reading might promote a fundamental aspect of spirituality, life-integration made possible through self-transcendence.

C. Alixxandr Ortiz-Roberts

The Agency of Daughters in the Hebrew Bible

Biblical Studies

The agency of daughters can be extracted from biblical texts written without their intentional consideration. Recognizing limitations in projects relying solely on the Bible to analyze "biblical Israel," this dissertation incorporates text, archaeology, and epigraphic evidence; modern ethnographic studies; agency studies; and neuroscience to understand biblical daughters as they live as characters in the storyworld of the Hebrew Bible.

Harley Jay Siskin

Jews Talking Funny: The Re-presentation of Jewish Speech in Old French

This dissertation teases out the manner in which Jews spoke in Northern France during the medieval period. It examines both Jewish- and Christian-authored texts to locate evidence for a linguistic variety unique to Jews. Although no such code exists, Jews' linguistic performance showed their full engagement in the signifying system of the larger community.



Master of Arts Graduates

October 2020

The following candidates, having fulfilled all requirements for the degree, are presented to the Board of Trustees of the GTU by the Dean and President of the GTU upon recommendation of the Core Doctoral Faculty for approval of the degree Master of Arts:

Jeffrey Michael Adams

Arcana in Plain Sight: The Influence of Emanuel Swedenborg's 'New Christianity' on Maurice Nicoll's Esoteric Christianity

Pacific School of Religion

The thesis concludes that Emanuel Swedenborg's (1688-1772) theological doctrines for a New Christianity affected Maurice Nicoll's (1884-1953) personal faith journey in the extreme. Discourse analysis of Nicoll's published works and newly discovered private diaries reveal his appropriation of Swedenborg's thought-world resulting in a Fourth Way Christianity unique to the Gurdjieffian tradition, if not all of Christian mysticism.

Christopher Dunford, Jr. (with Honors)

Radical Acceptance as a Shin Buddhist Theology of Liberation for LGBTQ+ Peoples

Institute of Buddhist Studies

This thesis emphasizes an approach to pastoral care and counseling within the Jōdo Shinshū Buddhist tradition targeted towards LGBTQ+ communities. The theology expressed in this work is informed by a critical sociohistorical examination of doctrine, understandings of trauma and healing in contemporary psychology, and a Shin Buddhist model of pastoral care adapted from Jōdo Shinshū doctrine.

Harumichi Fukaya

Across the Sea: A Study of Tenrikyo's North American Mission before World War II

Institute of Buddhist Studies

This project is about Tenrikyo's overseas mission in North America before the Second World War. The rapid advance of Tenrikyo's North American mission in this period was enabled by the collaborative and transnational efforts of the Tenrikyo churches in Japan and the North American Tenrikyo community.



Elea Ingman (with Honors)

The "Divine Mission of America": Herem and American Christian Colonization in Sitka, AK

Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology

This capstone uses reception theory with a postcolonial lens to examine the text of Joshua 5-8, its use of the ancient Hebrew word חרם (*herem*), and the ways in which this text was used to justify Christian American colonization in Sitka, Alaska.

Kamran Nihal Khan

Demonizing Islam with Islam: Political Motives and the Proliferation of Anti-Islamic Rhetoric

Center for Islamic Studies

The mass proliferation of anti-Islamic rhetoric is manufactured and funded by individuals with specific political objectives. This paper reviews those political motivations and analyzes common problems with such rhetoric, why it is influential, and how it is used as a weapon. The work of one prolific author is used as an example to discuss these issues broadly.

Yae In Min

Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola Suitable for Koreans: Focusing on Korean Han with the Inspiration of the Liberative Model

San Francisco Theological Seminary, University of Redlands

Modifying the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius can enrich the spiritual growth of Koreans. This paper discusses Spiritual Exercises with inspiration from the liberative model and explores the path of spiritual development for the wounded, especially the repressed Koreans bearing *han*.

Comprehensive Proposal Approved

- -

Hye Hyun Han, HCSR

Porsia Tunzi, HCSR

Oral Comprehensive Passed with Distinction

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Hanna Kang, REPR, Distinction



Newhall Fellowships

Deadline: Friday, November 13, 2020 by 5pm

Newhall Fellowships are competitive awards for GTU Doctoral students in collaborative teaching or research with faculty mentors in the belief that such collaborative work will contribute to the professional development of the students and the mission of the GTU. Newhall awards offer a wonderful opportunity to work closely with professors whose interests and approaches parallel the student's on projects that often would not be possible under other circumstances. Newhall applications must come from both the student and the professor for a project involving both of them. The awards are designed to support both students (through grants) and faculty (through offering assistance to their research and teaching).

Applications for the Newhall Fellowship must be submitted to the GTU Dean's Office no later than **Friday**, **November 13**, **2020**. Late submissions will not be accepted.

For more information and how to apply, please visit: <u>www.gtu.edu/newhall-fellowship</u>

Chan Essay Prize



Matthew Hartman was awarded Honorable Mention, for his essay, "The Historical Relations of our Ecological Crisis: Theology, Colonialism, and Capitalism's Logics".

Congratulations, Myoung-Ho and Matthew!



Library News

In-library Study Appointments

We are beginning to re-open the Berkeley GTU library by appointment only!

Only GTU students, faculty, and staff may make appointments in this phase. Alumni, community patrons, and reciprocal borrowers will be invited in future phases. We are prioritizing quiet study space, while other library services will remain online. If you are not feeling well, please do not come into the library; instead, please use our scanning services and the contactless curbside pickup.

For those of you ready to come back in, please read all the directions on this page to select your time slot: <u>www.gtu.edu/library-reservations</u>.

Curbside Pickup Update!

We have moved to self-booking of curbside appointments for a speedy and smooth process.

First: Place any items you want on hold and wait for them to arrive at the hold shelf.

Then: After your books have arrived on the hold shelf, reserve a time online to pick them up.

Berkeley pickup: gtu.libcal.com/reserve

San Anselmo pickup: gtu.libcal.com/reserve/sfts

Any questions? Email us at library@gtu.edu or chat us via the library homepage from 9am - 4pm (Pacific Time) on weekdays.

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

Steps to safely visit the library to study. More info at: https://www.gtu.edu/library-reservations



RESERVE YOUR SPOT

Place holds on any items you need from the GTU library shelves and use our online appointment system to reserve a study space 24 hours in advance.

Read all directions and procedures carefully

WEAR MASKS & SOCIAL DISTANCE



Please wear masks. Masks should be worn over your nose and mouth at all times. Please maintain social distance while waiting to be let into the library and while you are in the library. There are markings on the floor to help you maintain social distance.



ASK QUESTIONS VIA CHAT OR EMAIL

Questions that come up during your study appointment should be asked via chat or email. On-site staff are busy filling curbside and scanning requests.





Use the appointment site and QR codes at the tables to check in when you arrive at your study table and when you leave. You can leave early, but you cannot stay past the end of the appointment period.

https://www.gtu.edu/library-reservations



Digital Learning Department

Workshops and Faculty Consultations

The Digital Learning Department continues to provide workshops during the Fall semester to help instructors teach with remote modalities. All workshops will take place on **Thursdays and Fridays** from **11:00am-12:00pm** (Pacific Time) until the end of November. If instructors are unable to attend these workshops but still want to receive training, please reach out to **Diandra Erickson**, Director of Digital Learning, to schedule an appointment. Diandra is available for both one-on-one and small group consultations.

Each workshop will be provided remotely through Zoom. Please RSVP for each workshop by emailing **derickson@gtu.edu**. Below are the workshops taking place in November:

Designing Engaging Online Presentations: Effective Visual Design

Thursday, November 5th, 11am Friday, November 6th, 11am

Developing Remote Learning Content for Diverse Learning Styles

Thursday, November 12th, 11am Friday, November 13th, 11am

Gamification and Game Theory in Remote Learning

Thursday, November 19th, 11am Friday, November 20th, 11am

Office Hours with Students

Diandra will also be hosting weekly office hours for students, every **Wednesday** at **1-2pm** (Pacific Time). These office hours are meant to provide a space for students to chat with the Director about any questions or concerns they have about their remote learning experience this semester.

Students can join any of the Wednesday office hours at: gtu.zoom.us/j/98808201190





Center for the Arts & Religion

Please email care@gtu.edu to RSVP for any of these events

Art Window Opening Reception

Thursday, November 6 | 5-6pm | 2465 LeConte Ave.

CARe's Fall "in-person" exhibition is still up and running! Be sure to check out the ground floor of the GTU North Building for our latest exhibition, *Art Window*, now on view - from outside! - in the Doug Adams Gallery window.

Our November artist is Elizabeth Jiménez

Montelongo, a visual artist, poet, and teacher based in the Bay Area. Her artwork is influenced mainly by her



indigenous Mesoamerican ancestry, Mexika (Aztec) artwork and philosophy, Mexican culture, Chicano history, and her experiences as a woman in the United States.

Join us on **Thursday, November 6** for a socially distanced opening reception! Let us know what 15-minute slot you'd like to join us between **5-6pm (PST)** on the patio of the GTU North Building for individually packaged snacks, 6 ft-apart conversations with the artist, hand sanitizer, and a chance to peek through the window at the exhibition. Hope to see you there!

Sacred Art and Interreligious Dialogue

Friday, November 13, 3-5pm

View the exhibition online at drawingthesoul.com

CARe welcomes **Dr. Kathryn Barush** of JST-SCU/GTU, **Dr. Tazim Kassam** of Syracuse University, and **Dr. Vijaya Nagarajan** of the University of San Francisco for a panel discussion exploring the intersection of aesthetics and interreligious dialogue and experience.

This event is run in conjuncture with CARe's Fall online exhibition, *Drawing the Soul Toward Truth: Hindu and Muslim Sacred Geometry*. This exhibition explores Islamic and Hindu geometric design in their particularities and as a tool of interfaith dialog. Take a look at this exhibition to learn more about how geometric design is used as an expression of faith, and how geometry has influenced the theology, art, and history of Islam and Hinduism.





Art Break with Keyona Saquile-Lazenby

Thursday, November 19, 4pm

Join CARe on Zoom for our November Art Break!

Keyona Saquile Lazenby (Pacific School of Religion) will be giving a talk on the work of Oakland-based artist<u>Paul Lewin</u>. This talk will explore the relationship of Lewin's work to Ecofeminism and Indigenous African spiritualities.





Center for Islamic Studies

Annual Black American Muslim Conference

Congratulations and gratitude to GTU alum, Dr. Abdullah bin Hamid Ali, for leading the 3rd Annual Black American Muslim Conference last week. The full recording of the conference, held on the theme of "Reclaiming our Youth", can be found <u>here</u>.

Black Friday Unity Jumma

GTU PhD student, Sundiata Al Rashid will be leading the annual Black Friday Unity Jumma on November 27, 1-4pm. We would like to acknowledge and express our gratitude to Sundiata for his extraordinary service and leadership.

COVID-19 and India's Islamophobia

Congratulations and gratitude to GTU PhD student, Paula Thompson for her co-authored report. <u>Read the full report here!</u>

New Website

CIS is pleased to share that as part of the GTU Luce community partnership grants, we will be launching a webpage later in Nov, featuring the work of our community partners working on the frontline, serving vulnerable communities during the pandemic.

AAR Committee on Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Dr. Munir Jiwa continues to serve as Chair of the American Academy of Religion Committee on Racial and Ethnic Minorities. A series of AAR panels and meetings led by the committee have been planned for the annual meeting. <u>Learn more here!</u>



Center for LGBTQ & Gender Studies

Religious Leadership In Congregations During A Time of Pandemic with CLGS Roundtable Coordinators

Tuesday, 10 November, 12:15 - 1:15pm (PST)

This CLGS Lavender Lunch continues a discussion (begun last Spring) on religious leadership in Christian and Jewish congregations during a time of pandemic. The coordinators of our CLGS Roundtables, who serve in a variety of pastoral and religious leadership settings, will share their experiences of religious leadership in the context of this ongoing worldwide health crisis.

Join us on Zoom!

What's Next?: How the Election Impacts Queer Jews with Rabbi Jay Michaelson

Thursday, 12 November, 1 - 2:15pm (PST).

Rabbi Dr. Jay Michaelson will analyze the results of the election and offer possibilities for the next few months, as well as the long term implications for our community. The discussion will focus on practical, spiritual, and ethical directions each of us might consider for the future.

Rabbi Dr. Jay Michaelson is an editor at the Ten Percent Happier meditation app, a contributor to the Daily Beast, and the author of eight books, including God vs. Gay? The Religious Case for Equality.

Join us on Zoom!





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Center for Theology and Natural Sciences

CTNS Online Public Forum

Why Christianity is Good for Science

Lecture and Q&A with Dr. Edward (Ted) B. Davis, History of Science Professor at Messiah University

Tuesday, November 10, 5pm (PST)

A vocal group of contemporary scientists and others known as the "New Atheists" pit reason versus religion, fact versus faith, and science versus Christianity. This talk responds directly to that attitude. Drawing on information and insights from the history and philosophy of science, Dr. Davis will argue that Christian faith actually complements the picture of the world coming from the sciences, helping us to achieve a deeper understanding of *both* the way the world is *and* how we should go about understanding it, while providing a powerful motive for investigating nature. The Christian doctrine of creation helps us to understand *more* of reality than science alone can study — including the very possibility of science itself as a form of knowledge about nature.



Professor Edward (Ted) B. Davis is

Distinguished Professor of the History of Science at Messiah University, Fellow of the International Society for Science & Religion, and advisor to forthcoming exhibitions at the National Museum of American History and the Museum of the Bible.

To register for this event, please email Melissa Moritz at **mmoritz@gtu.edu**



Mira and Ajay Shingal Center for Dharma Studies

Critical Sustainability Studies

Prof. Rita D. Sherma has been invited by the President of the AAR/Western Region to present the *Plenary Address* for the Annual Meeting of AAR/WR 2021. She will present on the need for "Critical Sustainability Studies". This talk will take place on Saturday, March 20th, 2021.

Yale University Forum for Religion & Ecology

Prof. Rita D. Sherma has been invited to join the Board of the *Yale University Forum for Religion & Ecology*. The forum, established by Mary Evelyn Tucker & John Grim founded the field of Religion & Ecology.

Journal of Dharma Studies Special Edition

Laura Dunn, CDS PhD Candidate, Editorial Manager of *Journal of Dharma Studies* has helped compile a Special Issue of JDS on Dharma & Ecology.

Sacred Art and Interreligious Dialogue

Rachelle Syed, CDS PhD student, is convening an Academic Panel Discussion on Sacred Art and Interreligious Dialogue on **Thursday, November 13**, from **3-5pm** (PST). This event is in conjunction with CARe's Fall 2020 online exhibition, *Drawing the Soul Towards Truth: Hindu & Muslim Sacred Geometry*.

Learn more about this event here!



Richard S. Dinner Center for Jewish Studies

Lecture Series: Jews and Race

What is the relationship between Jewishness and whiteness? What particular challenges have Jews of color faced and how do their experiences shed light on formations of Jewish identity? How might contemporary insights from critical race theory and African American Studies clarify aspects of the Jewish past? These are Just a few of the questions that this series will explore.

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All lectures in this series are online, free, and open to the public.

The Specter of the Orient: Jewishness as a Religio-Racial Affect in Weimar-era Jewish Thought

November 12 | 4pm (Pacific Time)

Paul E. Nahme, Dorot Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies and Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Brown University

Dr. Nahme's areas of interest are modern Jewish thought, German-Jewish cultural and intellectual history, modern Rabbinic thought, French poststructuralism, theories of affect and emotion, and critical race theory. His research focuses on the relationships between identity, affect, race, religion, and nationalism

Register here!

This series on Jews and Race is a collaboration between the Richard S. Dinner Center for Jewish studies at the Graduate Theological Union, the Berkeley Center for Jewish Studies, the Berkeley Center for the Study of Religion, and the Berkeley Institute for Jewish Law and Israel Studies.





November 2, 2020 Volume 25, Issue 3



WEDNESDAY, NOV 25, 2PM THRU MONDAY, NOV 30



VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR

EVERY TUESDAY WITH INTERIM DEAN DR. ELIZABETH S. PEÑA

9-10AM (PST)

Zoom ID: 967 6966 7418

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 and MA and PhD students.

Send submissions by the second to last Friday of the month to: **lwebster@gtu.edu** Lydia Webster, Executive Assistant to the Interim Dean

Graduate Theological Union Office of the Dean

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