GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION

A crossroads of wisdom, faith, imagination
THE GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION — dedicated to building bridges among faith traditions by educating students for teaching, research, ministry, and service — offers you a chance to make a real difference in the world. Our students come to us from around the globe. They’re drawn by an unparalleled depth of faculty and course selection. They’re drawn by a community that is passionate about understanding different perspectives and finding common ground from which to build solutions to pressing religious, political, economic, and social problems.

Your experience at the GTU equips you, as no other place can, to conduct critical and creative scholarship that addresses the most urgent needs of our time. Our graduates go out into the world as leaders, some called to educate others, and others to serve society beyond the walls of the academy. Wherever their journey takes them, they are ready to bridge religious and cultural divides, ready to turn dialogue into interfaith and intercultural service — to make our world a better place to live. They are where religion meets the world.
A dynamic community

THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA’S cultural and religious diversity is the perfect context for interreligious study. And the proximity of our member schools creates a dynamic intellectual community that draws scholars from around the world. In GTU classrooms on any given day, you may encounter a Baptist, a Jew, a Buddhist, a Franciscan friar, and a Muslim.

Outside GTU’s classrooms, you’ll find study groups, colloquia on special topics, Passover and Eid celebrations, public lectures by renowned scholars on important issues of the day, and intense discussions underway in the coffeehouses, bookstores, and ethnic restaurants that border our beautiful hillside campus, fondly called Holy Hill. When you seek a peaceful retreat, GTU member schools’ worship centers are open to all. Hiking trails, the wine country, and the Pacific Ocean are a short drive away. For urban and global connections, BART — the rapid transit system — takes you to exciting San Francisco within 30 minutes.

Forging leaders

GTU STUDENTS BENEFIT from the largest theological faculty in the United States, hundreds of course offerings across our consortium, one of the finest theological libraries in the world, a collaborative relationship with the world’s preeminent public university, the University of California at Berkeley, and a culturally and religiously diverse location in the San Francisco Bay Area. Our centers for Jewish and Islamic Studies; programs on Asian theologies, religions, and cultures and Women’s Studies in Religion; nine member schools; plus several affiliate programs — including the Institute of Buddhist Studies — offer students from around the world the opportunity for a unique interfaith education. By bringing together theory and practice, the GTU educates leaders who can respond to key issues worldwide.
GTU faculty

The GTU FACULTY is the largest theological faculty in the United States. Faculty members are diverse, inspired, creative, and excited to be at the GTU. They teach the theoretical and the practical.

Deena Aranoff
Ph.D., Core Doctoral Faculty Member and Assistant Professor of Medieval Jewish Studies

“THE STUDY OF RELIGION at the GTU is a sincere, serious, and often critical endeavor. In my courses, I focus on the ever-fluctuating aspects of Jewish life. Such an approach challenges a monolithic notion of Judaism and instead posits a Judaism that is changing and fluid. What are the more meaningful moments in my seminars? I would say it’s when the conversation settles into a thoughtful silence. It often takes three hours to get there! When I’m not teaching, I’m thrilled to be working on my book, The Life of the Holy Tongue, a study of how Jewish thinkers and writers have utilized the Hebrew language as a symbol in the construction of a distinctive Jewish culture.”
I’m excited about working on my book, called *Restoring Community in the Mainline*, which looks at restoring community focus or solidarity — such as exists in Asia — to American mainline churches. I teach Asian Feminist Theology, and in my class I have an Asian American woman agnostic, a Vietnamese Catholic priest, and a white male Buddhist. If I weren’t teaching at the GTU, I’d be teaching at a mainline seminary, and I wouldn’t have this kind of student diversity. The Vietnamese Catholic priest says he’s realized how stories about women have been left out of Asian Catholic bishops’ books, and the white male Buddhist asks how women can define their own stories within a Buddhist context. No other school in the world has as diverse a faculty and student base.

**Citation:**

Munir Jiwa
Ph.D., Director and Assistant Professor, Center for Islamic Studies

Boyung Lee
Ph.D., M.Div. Core Doctoral Faculty Member and Associate Professor of Educational Ministries, Pacific School of Religion

**Quote:**

“The GTU offers so many gifts: One is the ability to bring different kinds of people together for discourse across so many disciplines and boundaries, connecting scholarship with practice. Another is to foster a deep understanding of religious traditions as well as to see them within a broader interfaith and intercultural context. People often want to see others as being just like them, but at the GTU, we value each other for our differences as well as for what unifies us. Pluralism is truly a way of life at the GTU, not just a topic or method of study. I’m delighted to be building a Masters program in Islamic studies that will integrate classical scholarship with our center’s services to religious leaders and practitioners, teachers, journalists, artists, and the general public.”
GTU STUDENTS come from all over the world to our campus. They’re drawn by an unparalleled depth of faculty and course selection; opportunities for interdisciplinary religious study; and a diverse, engaged community dedicated to interfaith collaboration.

Emily Wu
Ph.D. candidate, Cultural and Historical Studies of Religions

“MY CURRENT PROJECT focuses on the practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine in the San Francisco Bay Area — particularly how they use ‘spiritual capital’ in their clinical practices. From working with people of different ethnicities, I’m learning that if we can put aside our assumptions and allow ourselves to cross boundaries, we actually share much in how we think and feel. The GTU is a very diverse community, and I’m working with fellow students to raise awareness in how we can all become more sensitive to the wide range of identities and perspectives. We are planning training programs and courses on diversity-related issues, not only to engage the GTU community, but also to bring new insights to the society at large.”
I WANT TO BUILD BRIDGES — among different ethnic communities and between society and the academy. My work in sociology of religion, ethnic studies, and film studies helps me identify key issues in film, ethnicity, and society that affect all ethnic communities. For example, there are strikingly similar threads in the 1927 movie *The Jazz Singer,* showcasing the Jewish narrative and in the 2006 movie *Quinceañera,* showcasing the Latino narrative. The ethnic narrative isn't well-recognized by film scholars, though it has been a recurring motif in U.S. cinema since 1927. I want to bring it to the fore so that through film and literature, the stories of ethnic communities can become more a part of the U.S. social fabric. The GTU provides great resources for me to learn and grow so that I can make this contribution to the Academy and to the world.

I'M PASSIONATE ABOUT MAKING THEOLOGY PRACTICAL for those in the ministry. How do we make scripture applicable? Howard Thurman informs us that it occurs by meeting one at the center of their need. I’m finding the answer is in merging head and heart, theory and practice, and I’m practicing this as a scholar in training and as a pastor in San Francisco. My church is located between public housing and million-dollar condos. I’m trying to eliminate the barriers that class and race create, and to demonstrate that we all have humanity in common. Coming to the GTU is like being dropped into a radically diverse reality, but it is the same reality as our larger culture. As we learn to navigate difference and sameness, we’re learning to serve the world. The GTU’s affiliation with UC Berkeley is a plus, and so is the nurturing administration. As a student with a learning difference (dyslexia), I am grateful for the faculty and staff, who have helped me tremendously on my way to earning a Ph.D.
THERE’S A LOT OF FREEDOM at the GTU to get to the wider conversation about religion. That is, there’s a desire to go beyond dogmas, understand the world better, see what humanity can be. Generally speaking, we don’t blink at the grittiness of life. We don’t see religion or people in black and white — people are really quite gray, you know, because we’re human.

So I don’t think of religion as doctrines or tomes — it’s what people do. I wrote Sense of the Faithful: How American Catholics Live Their Faith because I wanted to see and understand real-life religion. What I care about is the real thing, warts and all. The GTU encouraged me as a student, and encourages me now, as a faculty member, to go down this path, regardless of where it might lead.

Jerome Baggett
Ph.D. ’88, Core Doctoral Faculty Member and Associate Professor of Religion and Society at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University
I CAME TO THE GTU AS A BUDDHIST MONK seeking a Ph.D. in Religion. Where two other eminent graduate schools questioned my wearing monk’s robes on campus — they worried that believing in something might challenge my objectivity — the GTU welcomed me, robes and all.

I grew up Methodist, in Toledo, Ohio, a baseball-playing, Mickey Mouse Club-watching kid. But at age 12, I was captivated by the Chinese characters in a Chinese painter’s exhibition catalog, and my journey to become a monk began.

On the path, I took a 6-year vow of silence, an 800-mile, three-steps, one-bow pilgrimage from Los Angeles to Ukiah, became director of the Berkeley Buddhist Monastery, and completed my Ph.D. I’m passionate about education, interfaith dialogue, teaching people how to end suffering, working with youth, and playing Buddhist folk songs.

Ph.D. ’03, Mahayana Buddhist monk, Director of the Berkeley Buddhist Monastery and teacher at the Institute for World Religions and Pacific School of Religion

I HAD MY THEOLOGICAL EPIPHANY at the GTU. I am the daughter of a conservative Baptist pastor. At the GTU I began to think critically about the Bible. It opened up my ability to see God or goodness in so many other traditions, and to listen to my Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist brothers and sisters and hear what they have to say.

My experience at the GTU translates into the way I teach. I recently co-taught a class, Transforming Seminary Education, helping students to think critically about their theological assumptions, and allowing all perspectives to be heard and honored. Right now I’m writing an article for The Thoughtful Christian, looking at what it takes to make multicultural worship work.

Ph.D. ’07, Frank H. Caldwell Assistant Professor of Homiletics, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and ordained minister in the American Baptist Church.
Degree and certificate programs

**PH.D. AND TH.D.**
From these programs GTU graduates teach, conduct research, and work in advocacy or professional areas. Doctoral faculty members work with students in close collegial relationships — often teaching courses together — across a spectrum of study areas that allows for innovative interdisciplinary study. And the GTU’s partnership with the University of California, Berkeley, offering two joint Ph.D. programs — in Jewish Studies and Near Eastern Religions — expands our community’s rich scholarly resources.

**MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.)**
In this two-year program offered in cooperation with the GTU’s nine member schools and certain GTU centers of distinction, students explore current approaches to theological questions while honoring foundational frameworks in scholarship.

**CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS**
Graduate training and certificates in Islamic, Jewish, and Orthodox Christian Studies are available to the general public without requiring application to an M.A., Ph.D. or Th.D. program. A certificate in these areas and in Women’s Studies in Religion is available to current students in other areas of study who wish to enrich their programs and expand their base of knowledge, and to students enrolled in Masters of Divinity* degree programs in any of GTU’s member schools.

* Only the GTU’s member schools confer the practice-oriented Master of Divinity degree that prepares students for lay or ordained ministries and vocations. Member schools also offer a range of specialized degree opportunities, including certificate programs for people wanting to explore basic theological study.
Areas of study

Art and Religion
  (M.A., Ph.D.)
Biblical Languages
  (M.A.)
Biblical Studies
  (M.A., Ph.D., Th.D.)
Buddhist Studies
  (M.A.)
Christian Spirituality
  (M.A., Ph.D.)
Cultural and Historical Studies of Religions
  (M.A., Ph.D.)
Ethics and Social Theory
  (M.A., Ph.D.)
History
  (M.A., Ph.D., Th.D.)
Homiletics
  (M.A.)
Interdisciplinary Studies
  (Ph.D., Th.D.)
Islamic Studies
  (Certificate)
Jewish Studies
  (Certificate, M.A., Ph.D.)
Liturgical Studies
  (M.A., Ph.D., Th.D.)
Near Eastern Religions
  (Ph.D.)
Orthodox Christian Studies
  (Certificate, M.A.)
Religion and Psychology
  (M.A.)
Systematic and Philosophical Theology
  (M.A., Ph.D., Th.D.)
Women's Studies in Religion
  (Certificate)

GTU member schools

Visit www.GTU.edu for member school listings and websites

AMERICAN BAPTIST SEMINARY OF THE WEST
American Baptist Churches, USA; Progressive National Baptist Convention

CHURCH DIVINITY SCHOOL OF THE PACIFIC
Episcopal Church

DOMINICAN SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY & THEOLOGY
Roman Catholic

FRANCISCAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
Roman Catholic

JESUIT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY OF SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY
Roman Catholic

PACIFIC LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION
Multidenominational

SAN FRANCISCO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Presbyterian Church — USA

STARR KING SCHOOL FOR THE MINISTRY
Unitarian Universalist

GTU centers of distinction

ASIA PROJECT

• CENTER FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

* CENTER FOR THE ARTS, RELIGION, AND EDUCATION

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION AND CULTURE

* CENTER FOR THEOLOGY AND THE NATURAL SCIENCES

**INSTITUTE OF BUDDHIST STUDIES

**PATRIARCH ATHENAGORAS ORTHODOX INSTITUTE

• RICHARD S. DINNER CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

* NEW COLLEGE BERKELEY

* SCHOOL OF APPLIED THEOLOGY

• WOMEN’S STUDIES IN RELIGION

• Centers offering degree and certificate programs

* GTU affiliates
“You must be the change you wish to see in the world”

— Mahatma (‘Great Soul’) Gandhi