



Tufts

UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

E-NEWS 2.1.23



A Greeting From Your Hindu Chaplain

Namaste dear friends,

Best wishes on this first day of February! Recently, many in the Hindu community honored the birth of Ma Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of creation, knowledge, music, art, wisdom, and learning. Embodied in the form of a river, we can imagine the ice melting in the Himalayan mountains and flowing down to

give rise to new beginnings along the path to the ocean. The earliest known mention of Ma Saraswati can be found in the Rigveda, orally transmitted over 5000 years ago.

Ma Saraswati continues to hold a significant place in our hearts today. In depictions of Her, we can see Her holding a book and a musical instrument called the Veena. To me, this expresses the need for active engagement in play (whether instruments, sports, life) as well as the importance of education and imagination. The animal that accompanies Ma Saraswati is a swan, representing discernment. If you have ever watched a swan select food from a muddy lake, then you will see their face doesn't get mucky as they use their wisdom to only take what nourishes them. May we all be like the swan in taking only what nourishes us, nothing more, nothing less.

As I continue to reflect on Martin Luther King Jr.'s memorial day and the Celebration on Monday, I sit with the words of another activist similarly impacted by Gandhi's Satyagraha movement - Vandana Shiva. She writes in the opening to her book *Oneness Versus the 1%: Shattering Illusions, Seeding Freedom*:

"What is it to live, to be alive?
What is it to live well, to be well?
What is knowledge, what is intelligence?
What is ecology, what is economy?
What is freedom, what is democracy?
What is our future?"

Questions like these have been asked and answered many times, over lifetimes and eras. In approaching them now, we can turn to our inner wisdom guided by Ma Saraswati – infusing us with gifts of discernment and balance to help us find our way forward. In this light, I close with this prayer to support us in this sacred place between question and answer; it is a chant of gratitude and prayer that many recite to Ma Saraswati:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॐ
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

Sarasvati Namastubhyam Varade Kaama-Ruupinni |
Vidya[a-A]jarambham Karissyaami Siddhir-Bhavatu Me Sadaa ||5||
Salutations to Ma Saraswati, Who is the Giver of Boons and Fulfiller of Wishes,
O Devi, As I Begin my Inquiries, Please Bestow on me the capacity of Right Understanding, always.

As we more fully enter the spring semester, how will you discern your path of studies and extracurriculars at Tufts? What practices do you include in your day to help you know what nourishes you?

Dhanyavaadah and best wishes,
Preeta Banerjee
Hindu Chaplain

Chaplain Spotlight: Anthony Cruz Pantojas, Humanist Chaplain

Our Humanist Chaplain Anthony Cruz Pantojas will be the keynote speaker at the Ripple Conference hosted by Elon University. This student-led conference chose the theme "Stretching the Limits of Religious Identities" to center its reflections and conversations this year. Anthony will give their address entitled "Living in the Interstices: Spiritual Reflections from a Queer Afro-Caribbean Humanist" on Feb. 17. You can

[read more about the conference here.](#)



Anthony Cruz Pantojas, Humanist Chaplain

Upcoming Signature Programs



**MLK DAY OF
COMMUNITY
ACTION**

→ ALUMNAE
LOUNGE

February 4th | 11am - 5:30pm ■

MLK Day of Community Action

RSVP by Thursday, February, 2, at 11:59 p.m.

Saturday, February, 4, at 11:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. at Alumnae Lounge

How can we channel our revolutionary spirits to create change? Join the Interfaith Ambassador Team of the University Chaplaincy for the 2023 MLK Day of Community Action for community building, workshops on MLK's legacy in modern activism, and direct action. Together, we will explore our own roles in the fight for change through the lens of carceral and food justice. Engage in service and advocacy opportunities with Concord Prison Outreach and Ending Hunger New England to address these issues in our very own metro Boston neighborhoods and beyond. Locally sourced lunch and dinner meals will be provided. Registration is required and closes at 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, February 2. For questions, please contact University Chaplain [Elyse Nelson Winger](#).

Register for the Day of Community Action

Religious and Philosophical Programs

Tufts Hillel is hosting a FREE afterschool program for McGlynn and Andrews Middle Schoolers!

Engineering: Tuesdays 3:30-4:45pm

Arts: Thursdays 3:30-4:45pm

Tutoring On Both Days



Tufts
HILLEL
The Hub of Jewish Life
on Campus

Hillel Community Action Partners (HCAP) is excited to offer hands-on, exciting activities for students that align with Medford learning objectives. These sessions are led by Tufts students and are open to middle schoolers of all backgrounds.

Tufts Hillel Afterschool Program

At Tufts Hillel; Various Times Available

Tufts students come to Tufts Hillel, where they are available to help students with their homework assignments. No previous tutoring experience or work with children is necessary. Hillel Community Action Partners (HCAP) provides all supplies required by student volunteers. In addition to weekly programming, HCAP will host a final event in May to showcase student work (date/time TBD), in which volunteers are welcomed and encouraged to attend. [Those interested should fill out this form](#), which has more information. Feel free to direct questions regarding the program to student leader [Benjamin Silver](#). HCAP is also happy to provide names of Tufts students who have previously tutored.



Humanist Community General Interest Meeting

Thursday, February, 2, at 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. at Interfaith Center (58 Winthrop St)

Join us for weekly reflections on topics such as death, ego, aging, religion, time, and more. All are welcome. Snacks will be provided. Humanism is a secular philosophy that aims to provide a space for the sharing of ideas surrounding the human experience, such as ethics, identity, spirituality, power, and life itself. If you have any questions please contact Humanist Chaplain [Anthony Cruz Pantojas](#)



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true colors GIM + board games!

an interfaith queer space

A space for LGBTQ+ students of any faith practice (or none at all!) to craft and meet other students of different faith backgrounds.

All are welcome to catch up, play games, and talk about our plans for the semester!

Tues. 2/7, 7:00–8:00pm
LGBT Center, 226 College Ave.

 **join e-list!**



True Colors Spring General Interest Meeting

Tuesday, February, 7, at 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m at the LGBT Center (226 College Ave)

True Colors, the LGBT Center and University Chaplaincy's queer student group, will be having our spring GIM. True Colors is open to all LGBTQ+ and questioning students of all faith, religious, or philosophical identities (including none at all!). We will be crafting, playing board games, catching up, and discussing our upcoming semester plans. Meeting every other Tuesday!

RESISTING WHITE CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM: AN EVENING WITH THE MAKERS OF “ARE WE THERE YET?”



**PROTESTANT EVENING WORSHIP,
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 7PM
GODDARD CHAPEL (DINNER PROVIDED)**

We are excited to welcome Boston-based activists and filmmakers Calvin Lee and Marisa Prince to campus. They are a Korean and Black sibling(esque) duo, bonded together in the belly of white, wealthy, conservative Evangelical spaces, who represent a growing number wrestling with the Church's history of power, abuse, oppression and discrimination. Join us for worship and dinner, centered around a discussion of their short film

**Are We There YET? Learn more at
<https://www.wearegospel.world/>.**

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Resisting White Christian Nationalism: An Evening with the Makers of “Are We There YET?”

Sunday, February 5, 7:00 p.m. at Goddard Chapel (Dinner Provided)

We are excited to welcome Boston-based activists and filmmakers Calvin Lee and Marisa Prince to campus. They are a Korean and Black sibling(esque) duo, bonded together in the belly of white, wealthy, conservative Evangelical spaces, who represent a growing number wrestling with the Church's history of power, abuse, oppression and discrimination. Join us for worship and dinner, centered around a discussion of their short film *Are We There YET?* [Learn more here](https://www.wearegospel.world/).

Resources, Scholarships, and Opportunities

Project Connect

Meet new people, make meaningful connections, and build community on campus



tinyurl.com/projectconnectspring2023

Project Connect with Counseling and Mental Health Services

Apply Now

Friendships can help buffer against the daily stressors of school and life. But building a social network can be tough, and we want to help! Project Connect is designed to help Tufts students build meaningful connections. [register here to learn more](https://tinyurl.com/projectconnectspring2023).

APPLY TO BE A TISCH SCHOLAR

A multi-year program that supports you to...

- Work with a community organization
- Build community with your cohort to support thoughtful reflection
- Develop the knowledge and skills to support your civic engagement goals

**APPLICATION DUE
DATE: FEBRUARY 15**

Rising sophomores & juniors are encouraged to apply!

Applications are open now! Learn more and find an information session.



Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Civic Life



Tisch Scholar Applications

Due Wednesday, February 15

The Tisch Scholars is a unique leadership development program that combines academic coursework, fieldwork in local communities, skill-building, and critical reflection. Scholars acquire the values, knowledge, and skills they need to address pressing social issues and effect meaningful change while building a supportive community to strengthen civic engagement at Tufts University and beyond. [Apply and learn more here](#)

Info sessions:

January 25, 6:00 PM, Barnum Room 100

February 7, 3:00 PM, [Virtual - register here](#)

February 13, 4:00 PM, Barnum Room 100

Part 5 of the 8-part series



TUFTS COMMUNITY UNION
(TCU) SENATE PRESENTS

Let's Talk about DEIJ at Tufts

Inclusivity - Belonging - Diversity

Friday
February
3rd @
5:00pm

Full- School Town Hall

AT JOYCE CUMMINGS
CENTER ROOM 160



Submit
questions
here!

Free food
will be
provided

Speakers:



Tony Monaco

Tufts President



Hope Freeman

Senior Director, LGBT
and Women's Center



Camille Lizarribar

Dean of Student
Affairs/Chief Student
Affairs Officer



Caroline Genco

Provost ad interim



Ellise LaMotte

Associate Dean of
Student Diversity,
Inclusion, and Success



Yolanda Smith

Executive Director of
Public Safety

...and more

For More
Information:

@tufts_senate

Full-School Town Hall

Friday, February 3, 5:00 p.m. at Joyce Cumming Center (JCC) Room 160

Tufts Community Union (TCU) Senate is hosting a town hall February 3rd centered around Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice. TCU has invited a panel of staff, faculty and administrators with the goal of facilitating a Q&A discussion. Scan the QR code to submit feedback/questions to shape the conversation!



From the Ravidassia Sabha, Vancouver, a temple and community center for Dalits who are devoted to Guru Ravidass. Photo by Sasha Sabherwal, 2019

COLLECTIVE FICTIONS OF CASTE:

Unsettling Caste, Gender, and Religion in the Sikh Diaspora of the Transnational Pacific Northwest

Caste, a complex form of social stratification in Hinduism, continues to differentiate members of the Sikh community in the Pacific Northwest diaspora. Despite the anti-caste foundational tenets of Sikhism, many Sikhs hold onto the legacies of caste, especially if they identify as Jat (a powerful caste in Punjab, India and its diaspora) and view Chamars (otherwise known as Dalits, or those belonging to the lowest caste) as subordinate to them. In this talk, I explore the transnational dimensions of caste in the Canadian and American Sikh diasporas of the Pacific Northwest through interviews and ethnographic fieldwork with Jats and Dalits across the region. I examine how Jats develop contradictory and shilling narratives in defense of their caste status, and I ultimately argue that while Jats tell stories that deny their complicity in perpetuating caste hierarchies, their maintenance of Jat pride is part of a collective fiction that further heightens caste divisions in the diaspora.



Sasha Sabherwal
CHAT Postdoctoral Fellow

Wednesday, February 8 12PM Lunch served Fung House 48 Profs Row

Sasha Sabherwal, CHAT Postdoctoral Fellow

Wednesday, February 8, 12:00 p.m. at the Fung House (48 Professors Row)

Join Center for the Humanities at Tufts (CHAT) Postdoctoral Fellow Sasha Sabherwal as she discusses "Collective Fictions of Caste: Unsettling Caste, Gender, and Religion in the Sikh Diaspora of the Transnational Pacific Northwest."

Upcoming Religious Celebrations and Observances

These events are drawn from the multifaith calendar maintained by the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at Harvard Divinity School. To see more upcoming religious holidays and festivals, please follow the link to the [Harvard Divinity School calendar](#).

Imbolc

Wed., Feb. 1, 2023

Tradition: Wicca/Paganism

The first fertility festival, celebrating the approach of spring and the growth of light in the darkness.

Tu B'Shevat

Sun., Feb. 5, 2023

Tradition: Judaism

A celebration of the new year of the trees, one of the new years in the Jewish calendar.

Nirvana Day

Wed., Feb. 15, 2023

Tradition: Buddhism

In the northern tradition, it commemorates the parinirvana of the Buddha. In cultures of Southeast Asia, the Buddha's parinirvana is remembered during Wesak. The dates and names of Buddhist celebrations vary significantly among cultures and communities.

Support the University Chaplaincy

Supporting dynamic programs at Tufts University in religious, spiritual, ethical, and cultural life is easy and vital to our work. To donate, please click on the button below. Thank you for your generosity.

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ABOUT US

The University Chaplaincy is a dynamic hub supporting religious, spiritual, ethical, and cultural life for all members of the Tufts community. We provide pastoral care, support religious and philosophical communities, educate about spiritual and ethical issues in society and the world, and promote multifaith engagement.

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