



MEMORANDUM

To: Graduate Students

From: Dr. Colleen Shantz, Director, Graduate Centre for Theological Studies

Date: September 2, 2020

Re: Academic continuity for the Fall semester

Greetings on the cusp of a new academic year!

This memo covers a number of details that will be useful to you as the semester gets underway, in particular some of the ways that we will continue to facilitate program requirements while physical meetings are limited.

Before proceeding to those matters, let me introduce **Dr Jesse Billett**, who began his term as Graduate Coordinator in the GCTS this July. Dr Billett is Associate Professor at Trinity College, where he teaches in the area of the history of Christian worship. In his work as Coordinator, he oversees a number of matters, particularly those relating to student progress and supervision. We are grateful for the work he is already doing for graduate students.

- 1) Over the past several months **General Examinations** (conjoint PHD students) have been limited to the 24-hour take-home format. Because of changes to government restrictions, we will soon be able to offer the *in-classroom option* again.
 - Examinations that are scheduled from September 17 onward may be taken in either format with the permission of your supervisory committee. Supervisors whose students have exams scheduled as take-home and who would like to change them should contact the GCTS to make arrangements
- 2) **Final Oral Examinations** (defences) of dissertations will continue to be conducted *remotely only*, at least until the end of the Fall semester. We will continue to update students about the options as government regulations change in response to pandemic management.
- 3) **Study carrels** at Robarts library are not available for use this Fall. When the libraries are again open for their full range of use we will notify you and reactivate the application process.
- 4) The **Research Ethics Board** (REB) has established new COVID protocols for all research that involves human subjects. All students who already have REB approval for their current research and all new applications for such approval require submission of a completed [Face-to-Face Human Research Checklist](#). You will find information about this new requirement here: <https://research.utoronto.ca/ethics-human-research/ethics-human-research>.

If you have questions relating to registration, housing, returning to Canada/quarantine, and financial aid please address them to your [college of registration](#), which oversees these matters.

Finally, much of the work that keeps an academic institution running smoothly takes place behind the scenes. The past few months have challenged that smooth running in multiple ways and the staff in the GCTS have been working steadfastly in difficult circumstances to ensure continuity of support and programming during the sudden transition to remote conditions. When you have the opportunity please join me in thanking Jennifer Bardeggia; Alison Hari-Singh; David Wagschal, GCTS Administrator; and Diane Henson, TST Registrar, for keeping the good ship GCTS steady during these turbulent times!

There is much to learn over these next months about ourselves and about the flourishing of human communities during times of change. We are fortunate to be able to bring all the resources of our studies and commitments to these questions. May you find inspiration and purpose in this shared pursuit. Welcome to the 2020-2021 academic year!