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Dr. Hodayra Ziad, affiliated assistant professor of Muslim Studies.

Chicago Theological Seminary Names Dr. Hodayra Ziad Affiliated Assistant Professor of Muslim Studies

CHICAGO, June 25, 2018 – Chicago Theological Seminary today announced the appointment of Dr. Hodayra Ziad as affiliated assistant professor of Muslim Studies. The position is the first professorship dedicated to Muslim Studies in CTS's 163-year history.

Dr. Ziad was selected from an impressive field of candidates to join the renowned seminary's diverse faculty and student population known for their work at the intersection of academic discovery and public life and committed to moving theological education beyond its insular nature and to significant engagement in the public square.

Supported through a generous gift from a philanthropic Muslim family, Dr. Ziad's appointment builds on the CTS legacy of interfaith work, the groundbreaking work of Dr. Rami Nashashibi as visiting professor in Sociology of Religion & Muslim Studies, the recent establishment of the InterReligious Institute (IRI), and strengthens the institution's impact in dismantling Christian privilege and anti-Muslim bias through education and activism.

In addition to her teaching duties, Dr. Ziad will work closely with the IRI, providing guidance on programming and interfaith engagement and research, and will co-facilitate a cohort of religiously diverse students interested in interreligious engagement.

"I am excited to welcome Dr. Ziad to CTS," said Rev. Lisa N. Seiwert, project director for the IRI. "Her scholarship, expertise, and commitment to interreligious engagement will help to shape and grow the IRI. In today's social, cultural, and political environment there is an urgent need for leaders who can bring people together, challenge structures of discrimination, and increase understanding between individuals and institutions that orient around religion differently."

Rev. Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder, PhD, newly-appointed vice president for academic affairs and academic dean, is especially pleased to welcome Dr. Ziad to CTS. "Dr. Ziad's commitment to interfaith engagement and her scholarship in Muslim Studies will enrich our faculty, community, and classroom offerings. I believe our students will benefit from this collaboration. I look forward to welcoming Dr. Ziad to CTS and working closely with her in the months and years to come."

Dr. Ziad's academic research explores the creation of religious selfhood and subjectivity and its relationship to language, especially in Indo-Persian traditions. Her popular writings engage Islamic spirituality, religion and the arts, religion, and humor, and interreligious engagement and institution-building. Dr. Ziad has fifteen years of experience in interreligious programming and public education on Islam, creating, and collaborating on workshops, courses and retreats that help community leaders navigate and thrive in an interreligious world. She is also invested in raising awareness of Islamophobia and interrogating intersections with anti-Black racism, anti-Semitism, wealth inequality, and gender injustice.

Dr. Ziad has been active in imagining forward the new academic field of Interreligious Studies, serving for five years as co-founder and co-chair of the American Academy of Religion's Unit in Interreligious and Interfaith Studies. She is co-editor

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(with Rabbi Or Rose and Rev. Soren Hessler) of *Words to Live By: Sacred Sources for Interreligious Engagement* (Orbis Press, 2018).

Dr. Ziad was formerly the scholar of Islam at the Institute for Islamic, Jewish and Christian Studies in Baltimore, MD. She received her bachelors degree from Bryn Mawr College and earned a doctorate in Islamic Studies from Yale University. Ziad was previously an assistant professor of religion at Trinity College in Hartford, CT.

Ziad joins the faculty effective August 15, 2018.

ABOUT THE INTERRELIGIOUS INSTITUTE

The InterReligious Institute at Chicago Theological Seminary is dedicated to interfaith engagement in our community through academia, theology, and public dialogue for a more just and pluralistic society. The InterReligious Institute is funded in part through a generous lead gift from the Henry Luce Foundation.

ABOUT CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Based on Chicago's South Side, Chicago Theological Seminary is committed to creating leaders for the next generation of religious leadership...whatever that may be. A leader in social justice, CTS is committed to LGBTQ and gender issues, interreligious understanding, and racial justice.

CTS is an affiliated seminary of the United Church of Christ. Since its founding in 1855, CTS has pushed at the growing boundaries of the church in order to make faith more relevant and transform society towards greater justice and mercy. The student body now represents more than 40 different faith traditions, perspectives, and denominations.



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