

CONFERENCE BOOK



October 3-5, 2025
Drew University

FETHULLAH GÜLEN'S THOUGHT AND PRACTICE: EDUCATION, DIALOGUE, PEACEBUILDING, AND IDENTITY FORMATION

This conference aims to explore the intellectual legacy of Fethullah Gülen and the Hizmet Movement, focusing on their contributions to education, interfaith dialogue, peacebuilding, and identity formation in a modern, pluralistic world. By bringing together scholars from various disciplines, the event fosters critical engagement with Gülen's thought and its relevance in today's world.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dr. Scott C. Alexander

Catholic Theological Union

Dr. Alexander is Professor of Islamic Studies and Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Catholic Theological Union. He earned his AB from Harvard University, MA and PhD from Columbia University, and MPhil from Union Theological Seminary in New York. He has spent nearly 40 years studying, teaching, and writing about Islam and Muslim-Christian relations, focusing his ministry on reconciliation, mutual understanding, and justice between communities. A self-described "scholar-activist," his work challenges Islamophobia and systemic bigotry, with recent publications examining Islamophobia as a form of anti-Black racism and highlighting interreligious allyship in graduate theological education. He served as Founding Director of CTU's Catholic-Muslim Studies Program (2000–2020) and has held leadership roles with the American Academy of Religion, the USCCB's Catholic-Muslim Dialogue, and advisory boards at the University of Chicago and Indiana University. He is co-editor of the Journal of Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society, a member of Georgetown University's scholars advisory council, and serves on the board of the Alliance for Shared Values.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Michel, S.J.

Senior Fellow; Instructor, Xavier Learning Community, Chiang Rai Thailand; Georgetown University

Fr. Thomas Michel, SJ, born in St. Louis in 1941, was ordained a Catholic priest in 1967 and earned his doctorate in Islamic thought from the University of Chicago with a thesis on Ibn Taymiyya. He has taught Islamic studies and Christian theology in Indonesia, Turkey, and the U.S., and from 1981–1994 served in the Vatican as Head of the Office for Relations with Muslims. From 1994–2008, he was Secretary for Interreligious Affairs for the Catholic bishops of Asia and Jesuit Secretary for Interreligious Dialogue in Rome. A noted scholar of Said Nursi and Fethullah Gülen, he has held positions at Columbia, Georgetown, and Marquette, and is currently an Instructor at the Xavier Learning Community in Chiang Rai, Thailand.

Dr. Sophia Pandya

California State University, Long Beach

Dr. Sophia Pandya is Professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at California State University, Long Beach. She earned her BA from UC Berkeley in Near Eastern Studies/Arabic, and her MA and PhD in Religious Studies from UC Santa Barbara. A Fulbright scholar, she specializes in women and Islam, as well as contemporary Islamic movements. She is the author of *Muslim Women and Islamic Resurgence: Religion, Education, and Identity Politics in Bahrain* (2012), co-editor of *The Gülen Hizmet Movement and Its Transnational Activities* (2012), and is completing a manuscript on Hizmet, alterity, and altruism. Her research has also examined religious change among Yemeni women, highlighting how younger and older generations negotiate shifting religious discourses.

Friday, October 3			
Welcoming event (invitations only)			
Moderator: Dr. Kim Shively			
4:30-5:00	Registration/Reception	5:45-5:55	Naci Tosun
5:00-5:05	Dr. Hilary L. Link	5:55-6:00	Enes Kanter Freedom
5:05-5:10	Dr. Jonathan Golden	6:00-6:45	Keynote Speaker: Dr. Scott Alexander (S.W. Bowne Great Hall)
5:10-5:15	Dr. Suleyman Eris	6:45-7:00	Q&A Session
5:15-5:20	Dr. Nuray Yurt	7:00-7:15	BREAK
5:20-5:35	Dr. Suat Yildirim	7:15-8:30	Dinner
5:35-5:45	Abdullah Aymaz		

Saturday, October 4		
	Crawford Hall	The Space
9:00 – 10:30	Panel 1 - Life, Influences, and Spiritual Foundations	Panel 2 - Life, Influences, and Spiritual Foundations
9:00-9:10	Moderator: Dr. Alp Aslandogan	Moderator: Dr. Kim Shively
9:10-9:30	Dr. Adnan Aslan "A Comprehensive Humanism Stemming from Islamic Values: The Perspective of Fethullah Gülen"	Dr. Ori Soltes "Jihad and Transformation in the Life and Thought of Fethullah Gulen"
9:30-9:50	Inamul Haq "Fethullah Gulen, a Saint, a Reformer & a Humanitarian"	Dr. Antonio Cuciniello "Bridging Faith and Humanity: Fethullah Gülen's Thought in Light of the Abu Dhabi Document on Human Fraternity"
9:50-10:10	Dr. Oliver Leaman "Towards an Understanding of Gülen as a Theologian"	Wendi Lawson See, Esq. "Servant Leadership in Islam: The Case of M. Fethullah Gülen"
10:10-10:30	Q&A Session	
10:30-10:45	COFFEE BREAK	
10:45-1:15	Panel 3 - Life, Influences, and Spiritual Foundations	Panel 4 - Intellectual Legacy
10:45-10:55	Moderator: Dr. Lyndsey Eksili	Moderator: Dr. Derya Iner
10:55-11:15	Ali Unsal "A Contemporary Guide To The Heart: The Irshad Mission of M. Fethullah Gulen"	Ekrem Dumanli "Fact, Freedom, and Dialogue: Media Ethics in the Thought of Fethullah Gülen"

Saturday, October 4		
	Crawford Hall	The Space
11:15-11:35	Dr. Fevzi Sarac "Fethullah Gülen and the Ethics of Leadership: A Transformational Model Rooted in Spiritual Responsibility"	Dr. Mohammad Abul Mufazzal "Text, Context, and Renewal: Fethullah Gülen's Hermeneutics in the Age of Crisis"
11:35-11:55	Dr. James Puglisi "Keeping the Vision of Hizmet Intact: Lessons to Learn from the Movement's Catholic Neighbors"	Dr. Muhammed Cetin "Fethullah Gülen's Leadership Philosophy: Integrating Realism, Universalism, and Transformative Leadership for Global Impact"
11:55-12:15	Semih Kiyima "A Stance Beyond Resistance: Spiritual Leadership and the Theo-Ethical Framework in Fethullah Gülen's Post-2016 Discourse"	COFFEE BREAK
12:15-12:35	Q&A Session	Dr. Suleyman Sertkaya "Fethullah Gülen as a Modern Sîrah Scholar: A Novel Methodological and Intellectual Contribution"
12:35-12:55	COFFEE BREAK	Dr. Rafeeq Karimpanackal "Faith in Motion: The Transnational Dynamics and Local Reception of the Hizmet Movement"
12:55-1:15		Q&A Session
1:15-2:15	Light Lunch Break + Book Event (Room: 1867 Lounge)	
2:15-3:00	Keynote Speaker: Dr. Sophia Pandya (Crawford Hall)	
3:10-4:40	Panel 5 - Peacebuilding through Education	Panel 6 - Peacebuilding through Education
3:10-3:20	Moderator: Dr. Paul Weller	Moderator: Dr. Jonathan Golden
3:20-3:40	Dr Bilal Ansari "Gülen as a Pastoral Theologian: Identity and Conduct Formation in Muslim Chaplaincy"	Celil Akgobek, Mahmut Yilmaz, Dr. Yetkin Yildirim "Education as Ethical Peacebuilding: The Vision of Fethullah Gülen"
3:40-4:00	Dr. Zuleyha Mary Fikret "Revelation-Oriented Deep Educational Pedagogy: Fethullah Gulen's Response to the Crisis of Modern Secular Education"	Dr. Mehmet Evrim Altin "Gülen's Ideal: Hizmet Schools"
4:00-4:20	Abdulhamit Bilici "Three Dimensional Peace at Fethullah Gülen's Perspective and Hizmet's Practice"	Dr. Vincent Parillo "Hearts and Minds: Hizmet Schools and Interethnic Relations"
4:20-4:40	Q&A Session	

Saturday, October 4	
5:00-8:30	Chestnut Retreat Center Visit (Invitations Only)
5:00-6:30	Driving to Chestnut Retreat Center
6:30-7:30	Welcoming (Semih Kiyma) + Dinner
7:30-8:00	Speeches: Dr. Adnan Aslan, Theodore Howard, Esq., and Adem Kalac
8:00-8:30	Tour & Return to the Hotel

Sunday, October 5		
	Crawford Hall	The Space
9:00 – 10:30	Panel 7 - Peacebuilding Through Dialogue	Panel 8 - Peacebuilding Through Dialogue
9:00-9:10	Moderator: Dr. Ori Soltes	Moderator: Dr. Fevzi Sarac
9:10-9:30	Rabbi Dr. Yakov Nagen "Hocaefendi, Hizmet, and Healing Jewish-Muslim Relations"	Emre Celik "American Perspectives on Fethullah Gülen and the Hizmet Movement: Initial Engagements and Developed Characterizations"
9:30-9:50	Dr. Jonathan Golden "A Minority of One"	Kathryn Ann Graham "Interfaith Dialogue: At the Heart of Hizmet"
9:50-10:10	Dr. Seyma Aslan, Dr. Safiye Yigit "Peacebuilding Through Dialogue by Reflecting the Divine Names As-Salām, Al-Jāmi', and Al-Wadud: The Ascent Toward the Universal Man by Harmonizing the Seen and Unseen"	Q&A Session
10:10-10:30	Q&A Session	COFFEE BREAK
10:30-10:45	COFFEE BREAK	
10:45-1:15	Panel 9 - Science and Spirituality in the Contemporary World	Panel 10 - Women's Leadership and Agency
10:45-10:55	Moderator: Dr. Yetkin Yildirim	Moderator: Dr. Zuleyha Fikret
10:55-11:15	Dr. Alp Aslandogan "A Perspective of the Relationship of Science and Religion based on Fethullah Gulen's Discourse"	Dr. Lyndsey Eksili "Torchbearers of Light: Women's Leadership and Agency in the Hizmet Movement"

Sunday, October 5		
Crawford Hall		The Space
11:15-11:35	Dr. Kim Shively "Gulen's Reflections on Life and Death in Gurbet"	Prof. Dr. Juliet Perumal, Prof. Dr. Emmanuel Ojo, Dr. Tobias Orji "Mapping the Scholarly Landscape: A Bibliometric Review of Women's Peacebuilding through Dialogical Education"
11:35-11:55	MD Dr. Marian Hillar "Through Education to Recognition of Universal Humanistic Values and the Issue of Science in Religion"	Dr. Derya Iner "Faith Beyond Gender: Fethullah Gülen's Vision and the Role of Women in the Hizmet Movement"
11:55-12:15	COFFEE BREAK	
12:15-12:35	Asuman Celik "Uniting Heart and Mind: Fethullah Gülen's Vision for Integrating Science and Religious"	Hilal Akdeniz "From Complementarity to Transformation: Women's Agency in Fethullah Gülen's Thought and the Hizmet Movement"
12:35-12:55	Dr. Seyma Aslan, Dr. Nur Bilginler "Reading the Book of the Universe: A Hizmet-Inspired Vision for Reintegrating Science and Spirituality"	Dr. Arhan Kardas "A comparative analysis of the equalization of women in the context of international human rights and Islamic Law"
12:55-1:15	Q&A Session	
1:15-2:15	Light Lunch Break (Room: 1867 Lounge)	
2:15-2:45	Keynote Speaker: Rev. Dr. Thomas Michel S.J. (Crawford Hall)	
2:55-4:25	Panel 11 - Muslim Identity in the 21st Century Crawford Hall	
2:55-3:00	Moderator: Dr. Muhammed Cetin	
3:00-3:25	Dr. Paul Weller "Fethullah Gulen's Heritage and the Development of Properly Confident Muslim Identity for Contributing to a More Inclusive 21st Century Europe"	
3:25-3:45	Dr. Nevin Reda "Jamal, Jalal and the Question of Balance: The Practical Ethics of Qur'an 4:34"	
3:45-4:05	Ghada Ghazal "Nazm al-Qur'an and the Ethical Formation of Muslim Identity: Articulating Coherence and Responsibility in Light of Gülen's Ethical Vision"	
4:05-4:25	Q&A Session	
4:25-4:40	COFFEE BREAK	
4:40-7:00	Closing Remarks + Dinner	
4:40-7:00	Dr. Suleyman Eris, Dr. Ori Soltes, and Dr. Alp Aslandogan	
7:00	Return to the Hotel	