



WHITMAN COLLEGE

BACCALAUREATE

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2024
2:30 P.M. CORDINER HALL

ORDER OF SERVICE

WELCOME

Adam Kirtley, Interfaith Chaplain

GREETING

Sarah Bolton, President

OPENING BLESSING

(from the Jewish Tradition)

Richard Middleton-Kaplan, Lay Rabbi at Congregation Beth Israel, Walla Walla

Opening Words

Hinei Mah tov u-ma nayim

הִנֵּה מַה טוֹב וּמַה נְעִימִים

Shevet achim gam yachad

שֵׁבֶט אַחִים גַּם יַחַד

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for people to dwell together.

The *Shebecheyanu*: A Prayer for Joyous and Special Occasions

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחַיְנוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעְנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, shebecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'bigiyanu laz'man hazeh.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

Opening Prayer: A Prayer for Wellness

Eternal One,
I am filled with Gratitude,
For You, who has given me life
For my Family, who sustains me with their love
For my Community, who supports me with their warm embrace
For the strength of my body, which I have cared for
and prepared to greet this day
For the capacity of my mind, to allow me to reach
beyond what I thought possible

For the courage of my soul, to conquer my fears and
pursue my dreams

For the spirit, You have placed in me that will allow
me to prevail.

I humbly ask of You...

Remove all obstacles from before me
Help me navigate this world without impediment
Grant me the courage to persevere in moments of
weakness

To see and do acts of loving kindness along the way
And that through this endeavor, I may glorify Your
Great Name.

*Yibi ratzon milifanekha Adonai eloheinu v'elohai
avoteinu v'imoteinu,*

*sh't'kbadash et gufi, nafsbi v'rukhi b'khol yom
vayom, v'nomar Amen.*

May it be Your Will, Eternal One, God of our
Ancestors, that you
renew my body, my soul and my
spirit each and every day.
And we say, Amen.

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

“Sons de Carrilhões” (Sound of Bells)
Jack Ray, solo guitar

João Pernambuco
(Brazil 1883–1947)

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Awa Gaye '24 and Zurain Zeeshan '24
Hanna Lynch '24
Sueli Gwiazdowski '24
Mia Graham '24, Tali Hastings '24, and Nissa Schlossberg '24
Abby Munro '24
Tejashree Jadhav '24
Lhamo Sherpa Bhote '24

INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Adam Kirtley, Interfaith Chaplain

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Venerable Thubten Chodron
Pioneering American Buddhist teacher and founder of Sravasti Abbey, a Buddhist
monastery located in Newport, Washington

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

“Over the Rainbow/What a Wonderful World Medley” Israel Kamakawiwo'ole
Lau' Paula Rose '24, ukulele and voice (Honolulu, Hawaii 1959–1997)

CLOSING BLESSING

Merry Cockroft '24

PARTICIPANTS

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Dr. Richard Middleton-Kaplan serves as the Director of Academic Support Services. He is a lay rabbi at Walla Walla's only synagogue, Congregation Beth Israel, and received training as a lay rabbinical leader at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio. In addition to participating locally in interfaith events including the pre-COVID-19 Interfaith Community Immigration Seders and teaching classes about interfaith peacebuilding, he is the co-author of "Using Literature to Teach Peace," an article about interfaith peace writing and activism which was published in *The Canadian Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*. Middleton-Kaplan also conversed with academic and nonacademic audiences about literature and human rights as a member of 2021-2023 Humanities Washington Speakers Bureau, and now as a member of the 2024-2025 Speakers Bureau, talks with audiences about honoring women peace builders in Africa and beyond.

Jack Ray '24 is from Denver, Colorado, and is graduating with degrees in Music and Physics. He has studied classical and jazz guitar under Studio Music Instructor Michael Lefevre, and has participated in jazz combos and the jazz ensemble. Throughout his time at Whitman, Ray was involved with the Walla Walla community through teaching guitar lessons and performing with local bands at live music events. After graduation, he plans to stay in the Pacific Northwest to pursue a career in a physics-related field.

Awa Gaye '24 is graduating with a degree in Mathematics-Statistics and Economics. Born and raised in Senegal, Gaye enjoyed trying new sports and getting involved with student organizations at Whitman. She liked working with students in her positions as student career advisor and TA for the French Department. After graduation, she plans to move to the East Coast and pursue a career in consulting.

Zurain Zeeshan '24 is from Karachi, Pakistan, and is graduating with degrees in Computer Science and Economics. During his time at Whitman, Zeeshan was the chief operating officer of the Whitman Investment Company and the budget manager of the South Asian Student Association. After graduation, he plans to pursue a career in technology and finance.

Hanna Lynch '24 is from Fircrest, Washington, and is graduating with a degree in Anthropology and minors in Politics and Creative Writing. She has particularly enjoyed her humanities and social science experiences at Whitman. A highlight of her college experience was being a part of the Whitman Women's Soccer Team, and especially having the honor of being one of the team captains during her junior and senior seasons. In her time at Whitman, Lynch also participated in the Intersarsity Christian Fellowship and the Catholic Community on campus. In the fall, she will begin a mortuary science/funeral service education program through Lake Washington Institute of Technology.

Sueli Gwiazdowski '24 is graduating with a degree in Rhetoric, Writing, and Public Discourse. Throughout her time at Whitman, Gwiazdowski dedicated herself to founding Whitman's first-ever disability affinity group, served as the 2023 Delta Gamma Chapter President, competed in Debate and Forensics, and DJed her radio show called the "Lavender Disco." She consistently took her passion for peacebuilding to Washington, D.C. throughout college, where she is moving after graduation to begin a year-long fellowship in nuclear policy at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Nissa Schlossberg '24 is from Eugene, Oregon, and is graduating with a degree in Anthropology and Dance. She has been involved with various campus clubs and events throughout her four years at Whitman, including two dance performances with New York-based choreographers. Schlossberg has also been a co-president of Kehillat Shalom—Whitman's Jewish student club—for 3.5 years, leading weekly Shabbats and other Jewish holidays with the small but mighty Jewish community on campus. Schlossberg worked as an outdoor trip leader for Whitman's Outdoor Program and at a small preschool on campus. After graduation, she plans to combine her love of outdoors and childcare at her outdoor education job in Jackson, Wyoming, before moving to California to continue playing, dancing and hiking with kids in the Redwoods.

Tali Hastings '24 is from Portland, Oregon, and is graduating with a degree in Environmental Studies. She has served as the co-president of Kehillat Shalom which has been one of the most gratifying parts of her Whitman experience (and maybe even her life!). Next year she will be participating in a Jewish service corps program in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Mia Graham '24 is from Oakland, California, and is graduating with a degree in Anthropology, with minors in Psychology and Religion. She took on leadership of Kehillat Shalom her freshman year and has enjoyed spending every Friday at 5 with a warm and wonderful Jewish community. Mia has also been involved with Planned Parenthood leadership, the Whitman Off-Campus Studies office, Walla Walla County Democrats and more. Next year, Mia starts a community organizing job with Jews United for Justice in Washington, D.C.

Abby Munro '24 is from Glasgow, Scotland, and is graduating with a degree in Biochemistry, Biophysics & Molecular Biology and a minor in History. She identifies as Pagan and interned at the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life for her first two semesters at Whitman. In addition, she was the Chair of the International Student Advisory Board over the last year and a half and enjoyed volunteering with the cats at Blue Mountain Humane Society. After graduation, she plans to return home and hopes to pursue a career as a Gaelic science teacher.

Tejashree Jadhav '24 is from Pune, India, and is graduating with a degree in Psychology. As a part of her thesis, Jadhav and her two thesis partners worked with zebra finches to understand the influence of a communal environment on song learning. In her senior year, she interned for the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life and is very grateful to have had this learning opportunity. She has also been an active part of the South Asian Students Association during her time here. For her offering, she will be accompanied by her mother Nandinee.

Lhamo Sherpa Bhote '24 is from Nepal, and will be graduating with a degree in Psychology. She belongs to a family of mountain climbers. She is particularly grateful to her school in Nepal for the education she received—both Buddha Dharma and modern education. At Whitman, alongside her studies, Sherpa Bhote worked at multiple spaces on campus. She has always been surprised to see how humble and supportive the staff and professors are at Whitman College. She's been abroad for the last seven years, and while her heart wished to be at spaces in Nepal where Buddha's teachings are more available, she was grateful to finally to hear, learn and stay at Sravasti Abbey, founded by our today's keynote speaker, Venerable Chodron, where Sherpa Bhote was able to connect dots that previously didn't make sense.

Lau' Paula Evangeline Zion Rose Creek '24, a nonbinary, visionary artist and advocate for marginalized communities, comes from Mossy Rock, Washington. They navigated the foster care system with a \$10 pink plastic Barbie guitar, a sprinkle of stardust, and a dream. As a first-generation college student, they began their college experience at Walla Walla Community College and, under the tutelage of Adjunct Assistant Professor of Music Carlos Velez, completed their degree in Music Composition at Whitman in December. Their life mission is to foster a world where every child feels valued in their own uniqueness and feels safe to dream outside of the margins of their imagination.

Merry Cockroft '24 is from Poulsbo, Washington, and is graduating with degrees in English and French and Francophone studies. She was an intern for the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life from 2020–2022. At Whitman, she has also been involved with the Intercultural Center, Residence Life and the Whitman Jazz program. After graduation, she hopes to pursue a doctorate in English Literature.



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