White Privilege Symposium Workshop Descriptions

Morning Session (10:45 am – noon)

Unpacking the Whiteness of the LGBT Movement: An Intentional Dialogue
AD305

Join the conversation as we look at the intersection of whiteness and queerness. This session will start with an overview of the cycle of socialization and how it maintains a system of whiteness, then apply these concepts to the mainstream LGBTQA movement to see how the movement is rooted in whiteness. After this overview we will engage in dialogue with each other with the hopes of unpacking what we see and teach in our organizations and institutions with regards to LGBTQA identities, and how we can shift and improve this work to support and represent the true breadth of diversity in it.
Presenter: Chris Haigh, chris@truechangeassociates.com

Eyes to See: Words That Respond to White Privilege and Oppression
AD 205

Black woman poet, Claudia Rankine, has taken up the discussion of the position of Black bodies in the contemporary American mainstream as situated in the minds of the white public. Her text Citizen An American Lyric explores the ways in which white privilege impacts the Black body in the culture, community, and the workplace; moreover, these poems narrate the complexity of the response or potential responses, when the Black body is challenged by white privilege and whiteness. Her poems ask questions like "what did he just say?" or "did that just come out of my mouth, his mouth, your mouth?" (Rankine 9). "'Eyes to See': Words that Respond to White Privilege and Oppression" is a workshop that explores using words as a means of questioning and responding to white privilege and oppression. "Eyes to see" is a line from White poet Mark Doty's poem,"In Two Seconds" written in response to the murder of Tamar Rice. Doty uses "words as witness" to honor Rice's life and to acknowledge that his tragic death occurs because of his racialized Black body. Rankine and Doty represent positionality as "categorized bodies," yet they empower voice and use words to critique and respond to white privilege and oppression. This workshop tasks and empowers participants to use words as "eyes to see." Participants will craft individual and collaborative poems/collage poetry that questions, responds to, and acts as witness, to engage with and combat white privilege, whiteness, and oppression.
Presenter: Allia Matta, amatta@lagcc.cuny.edu

Connecting the Discourse of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities to Racism and Whiteness
AD 303

Many people are constantly experiencing some type of social injustice as a result of multiple identities, contexts, and systems. Language and discourse are central components to defining a social problem and developing actions to eliminate it. Policies, best practices, and organizing strategies are often the culmination of multiple people, organizations, and systems assigning meaning to various concepts in an attempt to effectively address unjust outcomes. Thus, discourse and language related to a social issue often act as a knowledge- and meaning-making vehicle between the individual, institutional, and systemic levels of society. The varying meanings within racial and ethnic health disparities/inequities discourse provide cues as to how we understand racial concepts such as race, racism and whiteness. Conversely, racial concepts also serve to influence the discourse regarding health disparities and inequities (e.g. are they unjust/unfair or only differential health outcomes between racial groups?). Health and health outcomes represent broad concepts on their own but when the adjectives "racial and ethnic" are added, another set of historical contexts and political meanings should emerge based on the racial hierarchy in which we live. However, a vast majority of the discourse related to racial and ethnic health disparities in the U.S. offers ahistorical and apolitical analyses of racial concepts. This presentation will discuss the intersecting meanings of race, racism, and whiteness within the

context of health disparities/inequities. The discussion will also include a comparison of health outcomes in communities to illustrate how racial concepts permeate our understanding, and thus our actions, toward racialized health outcomes. Although several intersecting identities affect these outcomes, the presentation will highlight how our country's approach to "racial and ethnic health disparities" often minimizes the connection between racial categorization in reporting health outcomes and its reinforcement of the racial hierarchy within the U.S. (e.g. decontextualized use of the terms "minority," "race," and "white"). In addition, the presentation will offer suggestions to use inequitable racial and ethnic health outcomes as examples of ongoing structural racism across sectors, where multiple systems intersect to produce unhealthy and unjust living environments. The presenter will use a Freirian approach to engage participants and emphasize how the content can inform change actions within their spheres of influence. Participants will be able: 1. To understand how racial and ethnic health disparities discourse can minimize the historical and political roots of race, racism, and whiteness. 2. To identify how racial categories and terms reinforce a racial hierarchy. 3. To understand the power of discourse and language in defining and solving social issues.
Presenters: Todd Vanidestine, tvanidestine@adelphi.edu and Laura Quiros, lquiros@adelphi.edu

Beyond Lebron: How Music and Sports Promotes White Privilege in a Movement for Black Lives
Bonhoeffer Room
The death of Michael Brown and seemingly countless deaths at the hands of police since sparked international protests against police terror and broader demands that Black Lives Matter in all aspects of life. From protests ranging from famous musicians and athletes to local organizers, various expressions of resistance will be shared. Are artists-athletes fair game? Does this pop culture model do justice to women victims? What about white silence? This interactive session will examine "the soft bigotry of low expectations" for white athletes and entertainers (who often appropriate Blackness) and hidden examples of white anti-racist exceptions. Participants will also learn how regular protesters bypassed stars, took matter into their own hands, and used popular culture to promote social justice.
Presenters: Jasiri X, jasirix@gmail.com and Chuck Modiano, cmodiano@skills4youth.org

Exploring the Connection Between White Privilege & Teacher Identity
AD 307
Nationally, 82 percent of teachers are white, including 60 percent in New York City, where students of color make up 85 percent of the enrollment in our city's public schools (New York Times). (Students of color make up over half of the public school enrollment nationwide.) Research has consistently shown the impact that same-race teachers have on student achievement. However, our education system privileges aspiring white teachers while making it difficult for teachers of color to enter the profession in a number of ways, including: the complicated certification process and emphasis on testing, which leaves teachers of color susceptible to stereotype threat; the average starting salary of $36,000 (National Education Association) that puts pressure on low-income college graduates to choose other professions; and our methods of evaluating teachers and schools that are reflective of white dominant culture (Jones & Okun) and prevent teachers of all backgrounds from pursuing culturally relevant pedagogy. In this interactive session, we will first dive into the issues of teacher diversity and socially just education through a look at recent research. Then, we will break into small groups to make personal commitments to challenge the institutional barriers that perpetuate a racist education system.
Presenters: Elie Bilmes, Elie.Bilmes@teachforamerica.org, Deshaun Mars, Deshaun.Mars@teachforamerica.org

Whiteness and Labor: Bringing an Understanding of History and Privilege to the Classroom
AD 205A
In this workshop, you will learn about the historical connections between race and labor policy in the United States. We will discuss how to bring these topics into the elementary, middle, and high school classrooms and examine developmentally appropriate resources. Much of the framework and content will draw from the research of W. E. B. DuBois, Ira Katznelson, David Roediger, and Angela Y. Davis. Primary source documents will come primarily from the Congressional Record, historical newspapers, and online news sources.
Presenters: Michael Robinson, mrobinson@theschool.columbia.edu

White Supremacy and Christian Hegemony: Understanding the Connections
AD 203
In this workshop, participants will investigate the connected roots of white supremacy and Christian hegemony, learn lessons from European and American Jewish history about the ways that white Jews have been used to reinforce the power of Christian elites, and consider the ways in which we can use this history to imagine a more powerful and connected way forward.
Presenter: M. Dove Kent, dove@jfrej.org

White People Showing Up for Racial Justice: Basebuilding,Direct Action, Accountability of White People in This Historical Moment
AD 30
This workshop is proposed by the NYC Showing Up For Racial Justice (SURJ) Chapter, to lay out the principles and activities of SURJ nationally and in NYC: calling white people in, not calling us out; accountability to people of color; risk-taking in action; working from mutual interest; and abundance. SURJ-USA has grown from 12 to 120 chapters in every region of the United States over the past year and a half. The workshop will involve information sharing, discussion of principles and action in large and small groups, and some skill-sharing and mini-training.
Presenters: Jennifer Hadlock, Kayla Santosuosso

Afternoon Sessions (3:00 pm – 4:15 pm)

Understanding White Privilege and Whiteness: Making Personal and Institutional Change
The Doctrine of Discovery, What is it and Why is Such an Ancient Document Still Significant Today
AD 30
The Doctrine of Discovery is the worldview that a certain group of people have dominion over lands because of their religious and gender identity. When white European Christian male explorers came to the Americas in the 15th century and onward, they were acting under the authority of the Church of Europe to colonize and Christianize the "new world". This 15th Century White supremacist document is still affecting First Nations people internally today. We will spend time examining the Doctrine of Discovery, how it contributes to White Supremacy and what learn about some concrete actions we can take to help dismantle it.

Navigating Triggering Events: Critical Competencies for Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race and Racism
Bonhoeffer Room
Ever feel so triggered you couldn't respond effectively? Social justice educators and practitioners often feel triggered during discussions involving issues of inclusion and social justice, particularly around dynamics of race and racism. Unfortunately, most triggered reactions create barriers to facilitating dialogue and building community. Effectively navigating triggering moments is a critical multicultural competency for creating organizational change. In this highly interactive session participants will begin to identify their common triggers and reactions during discussions on race and racism and identify tools to effectively navigating triggering situations.
Presenter: Kathy Obear, kathy.obear@gmail.com

Using Meditation to Understand White Privilege
AD203
This is essentially a workshop on how we can use meditation to understand white privilege on a deep level. It proceeds from three assumptions: (1) meditation is a practical tool for examining our habitual thought patterns and learning to stay with the uncomfortable feelings that arise when we do so, (2) race and racism manifest in part as a habitual thought pattern that we keep repeating, and (3) white people are in a unique position to dismantle racism as a system of oppression by understanding white privilege. Meditation is a caring and non-judgmental way to examine white privilege, which is important because of the feelings of discomfort that often arise when we address race and racism; meditation can help us work with feelings of guilt and shame, and to understand that those feelings are actually obstacles in the effort to end racism. The workshop would include a presentation on meditation and its benefits, meditation instruction and practice, contemplation of key phrases that force us to examine white privilege in our own minds, and discussion/dialogue.
Presenter: Kara Dansky, kara@onethousandarms.net

Decentering Whiteness and Building Multiracial Community
AD 307
Our society is currently centered on white cultural values, and access to power and resources requires that people adhere to those values. This is an inherently unjust and inequitable condition in a multiracial society. One way to re-imagine this social structure and make the transition to one that is fair is to engage in a process of decentering whiteness. White culture, in other words, must become marginal, just as cultures of color currently are. The center of society needs to be replaced with multiracial values. These two goals are interdependent, and neither can be accomplished without the other. Attempts to make the center of US society multiracial will fail unless whiteness is itself decentered, and whiteness cannot be decentered unless an alternative set of values replaces its central role. This workshop will examine how whiteness can be decentered, what it means to center multiracial values, and the implications for current anti-racist practice in the United States. What will a decentered whiteness look like? What shifts need to take place in white organizational culture? How will decentering whiteness help us undo systemic racism? What skills will a decentered white person need? What are multiracial values and who decides? What sorts of personal transformations might people be called upon to make? We will look at these and other questions.
Presenter: Jeff Hitchcock, contact@euroamerican.org and Charley Flint, DrCFlint@aol.com

Activism is Good Teaching: Challenging White Supremacy in Teacher Education
AD 303
Social Justice Teacher Educators of Color (SJTEC) are focused on preparing prospective teachers to meet the needs of a diverse student population. The praxis of SJTEC is focused on the significance of diversity, equity, and structures of power in schools. Unfortunately, the work of SJTEC can be met with resistance as the make up of prospective teachers remains overwhelmingly white as does the teacher workforce and teacher education faculty. How then do we shift the current teacher demographics so it is representative of public school students, half of which identify as students of color and who speak multiple languages? How can we work together in small and big ways to recruit and retain teachers of color at every level? In this workshop, we will use the Chicago Teacher's Strike, Seattle Teacher's Strike, and Detroit teacher's protests as examples of the importance of teachers of color and like-minded individuals in interrupting and dismantling white supremacy and white privilege in our educational institutions. Presenter: Nini Hayes, ninihayes@gmail.com

First World Women, Perilous and Powerful Representations: Confronting White Supremacy in the Media
AD305
Scandal. Getting Away With Murder. Quantico. Telenovela. CNN. BET. Fox News. Are we in a moment of revolutionized images of women of color? What is the history of these representations? Do representations have real world power? This workshop will investigate historic and modern images and representations of women of color in the media. It will explore both representations that may be considered "perilous" and those that may be considered powerful. Throughout this workshop participants will engage and discuss these images. We will develop strategies to confront and challenge the prevalence of white supremacy, sexism, racism, xenophobia, as well as other intersecting forms oppression in key forms of media. This workshop will be media based.
Presenter: Zahra Caldwell, Zahrac29@gmail.com

Understanding the Privileged Positions of Whiteness: Exploring the Experiences and Intersections of Race and Gender
AD 205A
Our ***Courageous Compassionate Conversation (CCC)*** will challenge and connect participants as we will...
1) Look at self and the systems (family/ living situations, governments/ political, jobs, schools, faith based institutions, neighborhoods, friends, sports, recreational settings, etc...) the missions and visions of these systems.
2) Educate on brain research and data around identity and "White Privilege, Hetero/Gender-Normative" trauma
3) Discuss American Myths & Language, Macro and Micro-aggressions
4) Build skills to create "Safe Space" through *inquiry cycle and safe dialogue.*
Presenters: Amy Fabrikant, sitorstand1234@gmail.com and Tiana Silvas Ladyt9452@gmail.com

Dismantling White Cultural Dominance and Creating an Anti-racist Pedagogy
AD 205
Participants deepen their understanding of how White Cultural Dominance, Superiority and Privilege show up in the classroom • Gain strategies for implementing anti-racist pedagogy in the classroom • Practice applying anti-racist pedagogy to scenarios related to race and racism in the classroom Description: How does your racial identity play a role as an educator? If you identify as white, how does whiteness, white cultural dominance and privilege affect your pedagogy? During this interactive session, we will discuss the white cultural dominance and its manifestations, as well as identifying where it is present within our educational institutions. Participants will leave with examples of anti-racist pedagogy and strategies to incorporate an anti-racist practice in your teaching or role in schools.
Presenters: Benny Vasquez, bennyvasquez@gmail.com and Laura Shmishkiss, Laura@bordercrosssers.org

Allia Abdullah-Matta, "Eyes to See: Words that Respond to White Privilege"
***White Privilege Symposium NYC*:**

Excerpt: *Citizen An American Lyric*, Claudia Rankine (2014)

You are in the dark, in the car, watching the black-tarred street being swallowed by speed; he tells you his dean is making him hire a person of color when there are so many great writers out there.
You think maybe this is an experiment and you are being tested or retroactively insulted or you have done something that communicates this is an okay conversation to be having.

Why do you feel okay saying this to me? You wish the light would turn red or a police siren would go off so you could slam on the brakes, slam into the car ahead of you, be propelled forward so quickly both your faces would suddenly be exposed to the wind.

As usual you drive straight through the moment with the expected backing off of what was previously said. It is not only that confrontation is headache producing; it is also that you have a destination that doesn't include acting like this moment isn't inhabitable, hasn't happened before, and the before isn't part of the now as the night darkens and the time shortens between where we are and where we are going. (10)

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When you arrive in your driveway and turn off the car, you remain behind the wheel another ten minutes. You fear the night is being locked in and coded on a cellular level and want time to function as a power wash. Sitting there staring at the closed garage door you are reminded that a friend once told you there exists a medical term — John Henryism — for people exposed to stresses stemming from racism. They achieve themselves to death trying to dodge the build up of erasure. Sherman James, the researcher who came up with the term, claimed the physiological costs were high. You hope by sitting in silence you are bucking the trend. (11)

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When the stranger asks, Why do you care? you just stand there staring at him. He has just referred to the boisterous teenagers in Starbucks as niggers. Hey, I am standing right here, you responded, not necessarily expecting him to turn to you.
He is holding the lidded paper cup in one hand and a small paper bag in the other. They are just being kids. Come on, no need to get all KKK on them, you say.

Now there you go, he responds.

The people around you have turned away from their screens. The teenagers are on pause. There I go? you ask, feeling irritation begin to rain down. Yes, and something about hearing yourself repeating this stranger's accusation in a voice usually reserved for your partner makes you smile. (16)

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A man knocked over her son in the subway. You feel your own body wince. He's okay, but the son of a bitch kept walking. She says she grabbed the stranger's arm and told him to apologize: I told him to look at the boy and apologize. And yes, you want it to stop, you want the black child pushed to the ground to be seen, to be helped to his feet and be brushed off, not brushed off by the person that did not see him, has never seen him, has perhaps never seen anyone who is not a reflection of himself.
The beautiful thing is that a group of men began to stand behind me like a fleet of bodyguards, she says, like newly found uncles and brothers. (17)

Allia Abdullah-Matta, "Eyes to See: Words that Respond to White Privilege"
***White Privilege Symposium NYC*:**

Mark Doty "In Two Seconds"
Tamir Rice, 2002 - 2014

the boy's face
climbed back down the twelve-year tunnel

of its becoming, a charcoal sunflower
swallowing itself. Who has eyes to see,

or ears to hear? If you could see
what happens fastest, unmaking

the human irreplaceable, a star
falling into complete gravitational

darkness from all points of itself, all this:

the held loved body into which entered
milk and music, honeying the cells of him:

who sang to him, stroked the nap
of the scalp, kissed the flesh-knot

after the cord completed its work
of fueling into him the long history

of those whose suffering
was made more bearable

by the as-yet-unknown of him,

playing alone in some unthinkable
future city, a Cleveland,

whatever that might be.
Two seconds. To elapse:

the arc of joy in the conception bed,
the labor of hands repeated until

the hands no longer required attention,
so that as the woman folded

her hopes for him sank into the fabric
of his shirts and underpants. Down

they go, swirling down into the maw
of a greater dark. Treasure box,

comic books, pocket knife, bell from a lost cat's collar,
why even begin to enumerate them

Allia Abdullah-Matta, "Eyes to See: Words that Respond to White Privilege"
***White Privilege Symposium NYC*:**

when behind every tributary
poured into him comes rushing backward

all he hasn't been yet. Everything
that boy could have thought or made,

sung or theorized, built on the quavering
but continuous structure

that had preceded him sank into
an absence in the shape of a boy

playing with a plastic gun in a city park
in Ohio, in the middle of the afternoon.

When I say *two seconds*, I don't mean the time
it took him to die. I mean the lapse between

the instant the cruiser braked to a halt
on the grass, between that moment

and the one in which the officer fired his weapon.
The two seconds taken to *assess the situation.*

I believe it is part of the work
of poetry to try on at least
the moment and skin of another,

for this hour I respectfully decline.

I refuse it. May that officer
be visited every night of his life
by an enormity collapsing in front of him

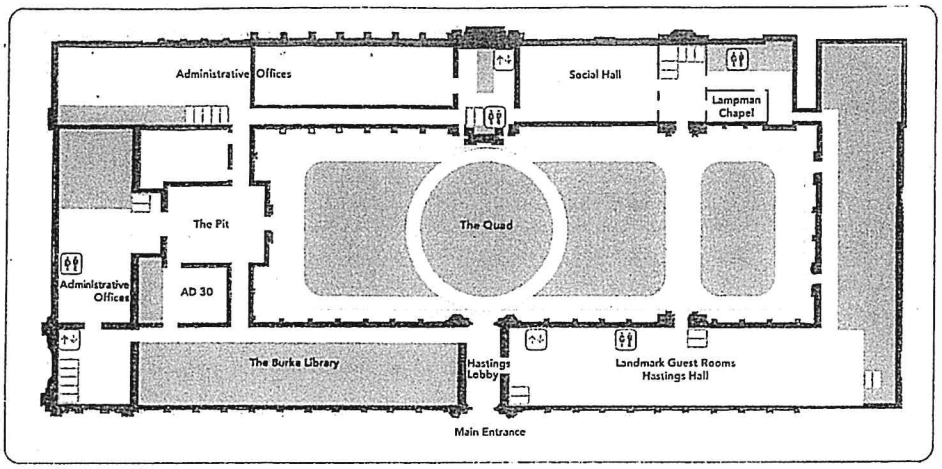
into an incomprehensible bloom,
and the voice that howls out of it.

If this is no poem then…

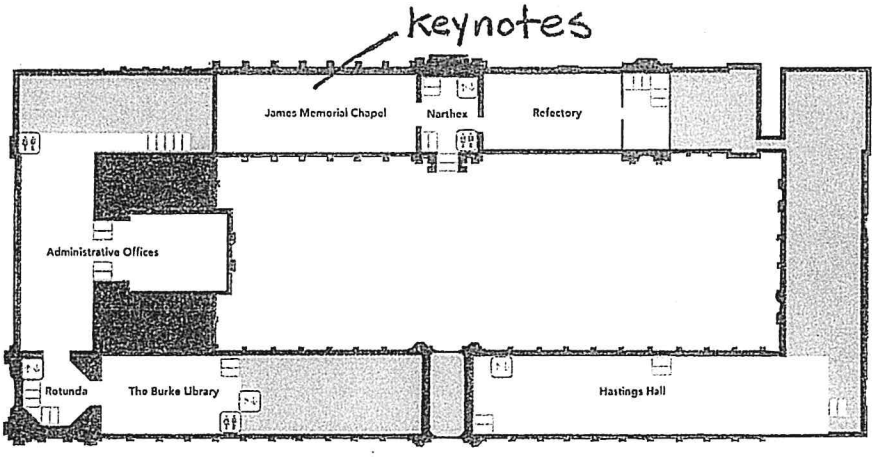
But that voice — erased boy,
beloved of time, who did nothing
to no one and became

nothing because of it — I know that voice
is one of the things we call poetry.
It isn't only to his killer he's speaking.

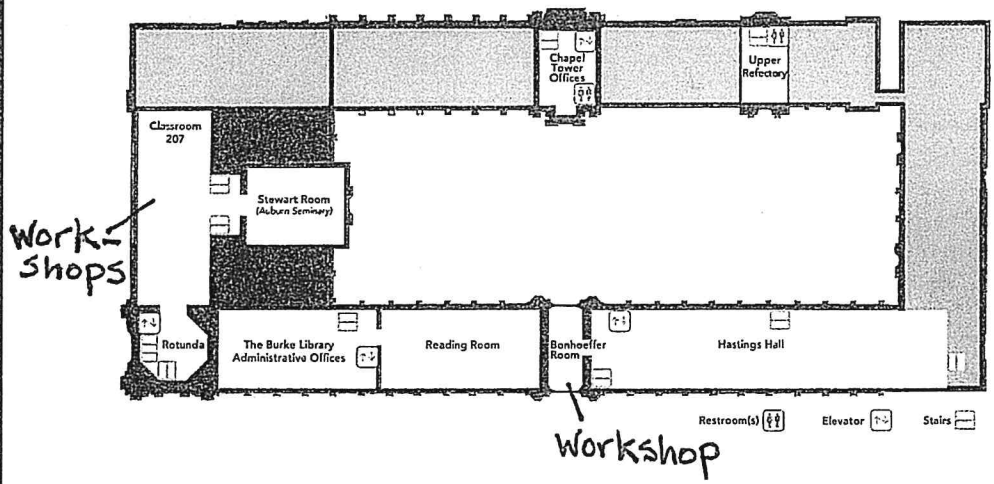
GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND/THIRD FLOOR



UNION

Second & Third Floors

Several smaller, more intimate events take place in various rooms above the first floor.

- Named for Union alumnus and scholar Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the **Bonhoeffer Room** is located above the Hastings Lobby. Take the Hastings elevator to level 3.
- The **Burke Library Reading Room** is one of the quiet architectural gems of the seminary, and is accessed by elevator from the first-floor of the library.
- Auburn Seminary's **Stewart Room** is located above Union's administrative offices.
- The **Upper Refectory** is accessible via the staircase at the north end of the Refectory.

UNION

First Floor

One flight up from entrance level, the first floor houses many of the Seminary's administrative offices and gathering spaces.

- With its pitched wooden-angel ceiling supported by stone pillars and colorful stained glass windows, **James Memorial Chapel** was built at the turn of the 20th Century and renovated in 1980.
- The **Burke Library**, with holdings of more than 700,000 items, is the largest and most important theological collection in the Western Hemisphere.
- The **Rotunda's** spiral staircase and four-story vaulted ceiling create a grand entrance to the Burke Library.
- Union's **Refectory** has been the site of many communal meals, humble and festive.

Ground Floor

- The 121st Street Entrance at **Hastings Lobby** is the primary entrance to and exit from the Seminary.
- Union's **Landmark Guest Rooms**, adjacent to the Hastings Lobby, provide welcoming accommodations for Union's alumni/ae and friends.
- The magnolia-shaded **Quadrangle** (or Quad) is one of the largest enclosed green spaces in New York City.
- Named for former Union President Henry Pitney Van Dusen, **"The Pit"** is a natural gathering place for students and visitors alike.
- The **Social Hall**, located on the ground floor and below the Refectory, is the spacious location for many elegant receptions and events.

Union Theological Seminary is located in the bustling university-based neighborhood of Morningside Heights, which comprises a rich concentration of academic, cultural, religious, and human-service organizations.

- The Seminary is bordered by Broadway and Claremont Avenue to the east and west, and 120th and 122nd Streets to the south and north.
- Union is located equidistantly between the 116th Street and 125th Street stops on the number 1 subway train. The number 4 and 104 busses stop in front of the Seminary.
- New York City's iconic neighborhoods of Harlem and the Upper West Side, as well as Jewish Theological Seminary, Columbia University, Barnard College, Teachers College, and the Manhattan School of Music are in walking distance.

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