How might thinking about music help us to understand eternity? How can the visual arts make us aware of an invisible God? How does the plot of a drama illuminate God’s action in the world?

At Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts (DITA), Jeremy Begbie and his masters- and doctoral-level students are engaged in answering questions such as these, poring the depths of Christian theology and study of the arts, including music, visual art, architecture, literature, and poetry. DITA is an interdisciplinary, innovative, and collaborative effort in Duke Divinity School based on the conviction that there are fruitful answers to the questions above—and many others—and that the arts and theology can have a profound impact on one another.

Begbie and his students seek to set arts and theology into conversation to advance the church’s witness in the world and to renew and refresh theological education.

Jeremy Begbie, Thomas A. Langford
Research Professor of Theology
WHAT DOES DITA DO?

• **Teaching:** training the next generation of leaders in the church and academy who will bring theology to life in a changing world.

• **Research:** bringing the arts and theology into conversation to let them speak to one another. This is exemplified in Jeremy’s work and in the work of visiting scholars and lecturers, postdoctoral associates, doctoral students, and masters level students.

• **Art in action:** new and collaborative ventures in theology and the arts; bringing artists like Makoto Fujimura and Bruce Herman, poets like Malcolm Guite, and musicians like Cordelia Williams and James MacMillan to campus; and commissioning original works.

In the spring semester of 2009, I was a M.T.S. student that accidentally—or providentially depending on your perspective!—found herself taking Jeremy’s Introduction to Theology and the Arts course. Within weeks of beginning the class, I changed the topic of my master’s thesis to work under Jeremy, focusing in the area of theology, architecture, and the built environment. This encounter also changed the direction of my life, expanding my perspective of what types of human cultural products can be the focus of Christian theology and why it matters for the lives of individual Christians. I was and continue to be inspired by Jeremy’s passion for the arts, his commitment to the church, and his vision for DITA.

—Joelle Hathaway, current Doctor of Theology student

dukeforward.duke.edu
WHY DITA?

DITA arises from the conviction that the arts play a huge part in shaping us into the people we are today. The arts have been intertwined with major tumultuous events and changes of culture throughout history, and very often they bring to the surface the major issues of life and death that have driven these upheavals. This project is designed to show this in action, and as a result, how through the arts we might begin to shape a better future for our culture. The consequences for theological education, and education more widely in the academy, are immense. This is the first program of its kind, and we believe that Duke has the vital and exciting opportunity to explore this new horizon.

The program aims to:

- Engage in pressing issues of faith in culture and society that are articulated through and affect the arts.
- Strengthen the academy with respect to the arts as media of faith.
- Train future pastors and theologians to think expansively about the arts, not simply as an accessory to worship, but as something that can express and portray the deepest aspects of our faith.

“To sound the depths of love divine”

—Charles Wesley

“James MacMillan’s St Luke Passion came into being through an extraordinary collaboration between Duke Divinity School, the Cambridge University Faculty of Theology, and the composer. This remarkable collaboration between artists and theological scholars modeled the way in which theology can truly be done through the arts: the scholars helped MacMillan discern the contours of this Gospel, and MacMillan’s music helped us all, in turn, hear the Gospel in a fresh and compelling way.”

—Richard Hays, Dean and George Washington Ivey Professor of New Testament at Duke Divinity School
**GIFT OPTIONS**

- **Your gift of $5 million** will endow Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts and is a naming opportunity.

- **Your gift of $60,000** will allow DITA to bring in a visiting professor for one semester. **Your gift of $1 million, $1.5 million, or $2.5 million** will support an endowed visiting, associate, or full professorship.

- **Your gift of $10,000** will facilitate a one-time named lecture or visiting artist. **Your gift of $100,000** will form an endowment to support an ongoing named lecture or artist series.

- **Your gift of any amount** can be directed to support student scholarships. **Your gift of $250,000** will endow a scholarship for a student studying theology and the arts. **Your gift of $750,000** will endow a full doctoral scholarship.

- **Your gift of any amount** can provide general support for DITA’s current research project: Theology, Modernity and the Arts. **Your gift of $50,000 or more** will create an endowment to support DITA in perpetuity.

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**Where will DITA go with your support?**

We seek to sustain Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts in perpetuity, outliving the involvement of the current dean and faculty members. Our hope is that it will also grow to encompass the engagement of the visual and literary arts in addition to music. Funding for the many accomplishments thus far has been made possible by individual gifts and special university funding. Looking forward, we need your support to fund current research and artistic engagement, as well as endowments to assure DITA’s long-term support.