



The Public Private Letter: From Ta-Nehisi Coates to the Letters of Paul and Beyond

Tuesday May 1
12:00PM - 1:30PM
Royce 306

What does it mean read a letter that seems to have one set of addressees, but which is redeployed in a broader or in a trans-local way? This paper tests the idea that the formation of Paul's letter collection, found in the New Testament, may have been influenced by large-scale inscriptional "publications" of letters in the cityscapes of the second to third centuries CE. Additionally, it contextualizes the formation of Pauline letter collections within broader practices of letter collections in the first and second centuries CE, including those of Cicero and Pliny. We'll consider together the power of texts that claim a limited "you" or addressee, but that reaches far beyond that original audience.



Laura Nasrallah is Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Harvard. Her books include *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture: The Second-Century Church Amid the Spaces of Empire* and *An Ecstasy of Folly: Prophecy and Authority in Early Christianity*. She is co-editor of *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies* and *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonikē: Studies in Religion and Archaeology*. She has just completed a book manuscript titled *Archaeology and the Letters of Paul*.

Email: csr@humnet.ucla.edu | Website: www.religion.ucla.edu | Phone: 310-206-1868