



THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES @ VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY

2025 SENIOR ESSAYS

- Baron Alt **Humanity in the Age of Technology**
What does it mean to be human?
- Jake Caselli **Distorted Success: Education as Total Work**
How has modern American work culture shaped the prevailing notion of "success" in education? What does it mean to be truly successful?
- Hope Frantz **From Burnout to Balance: Lessons on Work, Rest, & Fulfillment**
How can one truly maintain a successful relationship between work and rest? How can one excel in a time-consuming vocation but maintain rest and a healthy self?
- Meredith Green **Foundations of the Feminine: How Our Understanding of Human Nature Implicates Women's Rights**
How can approaching women's equality and dignity from Liberalism fall short? Can a Catholic understanding of human dignity and created-ness serve as a good foundation for women's rights?
- Catherine Gunther **Identity: To Define or to Discover**
What are the mistakes made in constructing one's identity? Is it possible to construct an identity which frees one but sufficiently answers the question of what one ought to do?
- Eddie Kahn **Love as the Common Good: The Family & the Parish in Society**
How should the family be oriented towards and integrated into society? Why are families important formative institutions, what pressures do they face, and how should they respond?
- Kirti Kaur **The Disorder of the World: Who to Blame and How to Cope**
How does the uncontrollability of the world lead itself to an anti-theological argument? How can one live a good life in a world void of an absolute meritocracy?
- Emma Kronenberg **Finitude & Feasting: The Gifts that Bind Us to Others, Our Nature, & the World**
What is a gift? What gifts are we given that allow us to belong to the infinite, and why? How should we use these gifts? How do we use these gifts? Who gives us these gifts?
- Victoria Leone **Membership vs. an Untethered Life: The Importance of Family for Flourishing**
How is family needed for human flourishing? How can you strengthen connections in your community by living intentionally?
- Cameron Logan **The Art of Discovery, the Science of Meaning: Unraveling the Unified Fabric of Knowledge**
What is the efficacy of the principle of NOMA in attaining knowledge and can it be used to bring about resonance in the field of science?
- Grace Maresca **Rediscovering Love in a Broken & Disoriented World**
Is our understanding of love too "idealized," or does it reflect a fundamental reality of human existence? Some argue that love must be given and accepted freely—but are there limits?
- Sam Matro **The American Paragon: Analyzing Lincoln through Augustine & Nietzsche**
Can a political leader truly ever be virtuous? Does Abraham Lincoln embody Augustine's "wise judge" from *The City of God*, or is he more like Nietzsche's *Übermensch*?
- Joe Morace **From Passion to Profit: How Sports Exploit Fan Loyalty**
How do sports function as a quasi-religion by shaping personal virtue, fostering community, and creating sacred spaces? What lessons can we learn about fandom?
- Sean Murphy **A Call to Destiny: Discovering One's Inner Artist Through Work**
What role does one's vocation play in discovering one's personhood and leading a good life?
- Andrew Nguyen-Lepczyk **The Beauty of Loss: How We Find Ourselves After Loss**
How do we reorient ourselves after loss?
- Zachary Rampelt **Pointing Towards the God-Shaped Vacuum: Why AA Still Acknowledges a Higher Power**
Can medical problems require theological solutions?
- Ashleigh Reen **Growing into Dependence: Lessons from Childhood**
How does the child illustrate the interwoven nature of the human person's independence and dependence? Does one grow out of or into dependency as one matures?
- Mary Swartzberg **Forgive Thy Neighbor? Exploring Responses to Extreme Wrongdoing**
What are the implications of the Christian call to forgiveness in the context of extreme wrongdoing? Where might efforts of "forgiveness" impede virtue?
- Lillian Tracy **Locked Out of Heaven: A Modern Catholic Critique of John Locke's "Second Treatise of Government"**
How can modern Catholic thinkers answer some of the fundamental problems of liberal modernism found in John Locke's "Second Treatise of Government"?
- Jonathan VerSchneider **Coloring Inside & Outside the Lines: Drawing Self-Love from Life's Fractures**
How do I love myself in a way that orients me toward the good without being blind to the destruction I have caused and will cause?



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2024 SENIOR ESSAYS

- Summer Abdelbarry **Digital Detox: Into the Wild...Kind Of**
How does engaging with everyday life without technology enhance or diminish our relationships with our friends and family, the World, God, and Society?
- Julianna Bibbo **The Problem with the Problem of Evil: Reframing Suffering & Returning to God**
How should we approach the problem of evil? In a world of suffering that often questions theological beliefs, how can we return to God?
- Andrew Bogdan **They Should Have Sent a Poet: An Exploration into Grief**
How does grief affect one's experience with the world?
- Chris Cokinos **Surviving the Cave: A Guide to Post-Humanities Re-entry into the "Real" World**
How can we re-enter the world after our Humanities education?
- Sarah Cotteta **Caring to Care: Examining the Adequacy of Nursing Home Facilities in the United States**
What does it mean to care for someone in a healthcare setting? Are there different types of care? Why is our system of nursing home care deficient now?
- Alannah Cunningham **Cultivating a Full Life Through the Challenges of Change & Relocation**
How do we cope with immigration and assimilation to new places and lifestyles while also remembering the past and where we came from?
- Annie Eby **This Ordinary Life: Dignifying Our Pursuit of the Good**
How can we dignify our simple, ordinary lives to enter into an excess of the good?
- Rebecca Goehring **Quantum Anima**
What is the value of human life and soul, and why does that differ between the classic thinkers and the engineering industries?
- Matthew Hogan **A Freefall of a Fleeting Fortnight**
What does the ephemeral reveal about the human condition?
- Peter Keepman ***Ad interiora, ad superiora*: Augustinian Interiority & the Quest for the Real Thing**
If human persons are body-soul composites, where does the notion of "the self" fit in? Or, indeed, is there even a place for "the self" in Christian anthropology?
- Lauren McLaughlin **All You Need Is Love? An Exploration of Love in the Active Life & Contemplative Life**
If love is affirming the good of the other, how does this conception of love play into eudaimonia or total human flourishing? Is love active or contemplative?
- Genevieve Mohr **The Union of Heart & Mind: Faith, Reason, & Augustine's Ascent of the Soul**
How and why does Augustine's pursuit of truth precede his rational inquiry? For Augustine, why is faith necessary for reason and ultimately understanding?
- Andrew Patton **Ευχαριστία: Lifting the Veil from Our World of Gift**
What characterizes our view of the world now, and how did we get here? How do we remind ourselves that the world is all gift? What is our role within this world of gift?
- Hannah Phillips **Absently Present: The Impact of Technology on our Attentiveness**
What is the relationship between technology and attentiveness? How does technology affect our attentiveness to ourselves, each other, and the natural world?
- Mike Oberschewen **What's in a World? The Art of Sub-Creation**
How do we see the world and translate it using story? What is the nature of subcreation?
- Isabella Riitano **Ageing Out of Wonder: The Child's Gaze**
What is wonder? How does it change as we grow and age?
- Ellie Smith **Education Sets Us Apart: How Can It Bring Us Together?**
What do we lose when we cultivate our intellect through education? Do we miss beauty or love when we are always searching the world for meaning?



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2023 SENIOR ESSAYS

- Natalie Anderson **The Ecstatic Soul in the Age of Mass Culture**
In a society of psychologically intrusive and manipulative mass culture, how do we aim for and achieve authentic human experiences?
- Cynthia Choo **Faustian Strivings: Exploring the Dynamics of Meaningful Work and Rest**
To what extent is our understanding of work and rest an objective dynamic? Or, are there dimensions and boundaries that we must create personally for our own lives, and if so, what would that specifically look like?
- Ryan Dery **Deus in Machina: Technological Salvation and the Internet**
Why do people believe that the internet is an instrument of freedom or the means to achieving greater understanding? How do people act when they think that?
- Hunter Dickson **What Does It Mean to Become an Adult?**
What experiences and demands are part of being truly “grown up”? How can we be ready to confront them?
- Nick Downing **The End of Liberalism?**
Have we reached the end of liberal order?
- Alexander Fezza **Should We Just “Let People Enjoy Things”? An Examination of Pleasure and Popular Appeal as Bases for Value Judgments**
How has modern relativism impacted our ability to make and receive value judgements about art and entertainment? In an era of surveillance capitalism, is possible to mindfully consume and evaluate content in a way that nourishes the soul?
- Cody Hogue **The Phenomenological Exploration of the Black Soul**
What does a Black phenomenology reveal about our understanding of God, World, Society, and the Human Person? How does progressive suffering and transcendence inform this?
- Sheila Joyce **The Dialogue Between Faith and Reason**
What is the relationship between faith and reason? Are they naturally at odds with one another or can they coexist in harmony?
- Derek Lattmann ***Amicitia*: Conviviality and the Fulfillment of the Human Experience**
What is the relationship between friendship and living the Good Life?
- Aubrey Mackay **Aristotle’s Good Life: Seeing Happiness**
How does one begin to repair the distorted relationships that get in the way of finding and living the truly good life?
- Jordan Meier **Furnishing the Good Life: How Design Facilitates Flourishing**
How can design and architecture aid in achieving the good life? What values are exalted and prioritized in the design of living spaces?
- Joselyn Miranda-Barreto **The Wounds of Erotic Longing: Why Love Hurts and Transforms**
Why does Love wound?
- Bronwyn Mogck **Body and Soul in Medicine**
How would an understanding of the human person as both embodied and ensouled change the healthcare system?
- Stephen Terry **A Conversion to the Good Life: How to Avoid the Temptations of Society Without Opting Out from It**
After undergoing a recognition to desire the Good Life, how can one avoid the temptations to opt out from the ills of society or to backslide into one's old habits?
- Joshua Tsai **The Power of Grace to Transform Suffering and Death**
How does grace transform pain and suffering?
- Nina Williams **Seeking Sanctuary: A Humanizing Approach to Migration Politics**
Are philosophical and theological attitudes about migration congruent with policy in rich liberal democracies? How would implementing such insight improve or advance policy? What does it mean for us to think of migrants not merely as economic agents, but as human persons?



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2022 SENIOR ESSAYS

- Amanda Allender **Growing Your Own Pharmaceuticals: Plants as Medicine from Pre-Modern Times to the American Pharmaceutical Industry**
How have medicinal plants been used in pre-modern times as medicine by indigenous populations? What are the ethical considerations of development of plants into pharmaceuticals?
- Brad Baldys **Refractions of Myself**
How do we live for ourselves, others, and God?
- Cecelia Bushway **Community & the Covid-19 Pandemic: How Community & Sacred Space Have Changed but Not Disappeared**
How has pandemic living shifted and redefined our view of the relationship between community and sacred space?
- Lucy Cobble **Raising the World of Nature to Eternity: How Human Existence Is Elevated by the Presence of Love**
How does love inform man's temporal, created existence, and how does that assist him in accessing eternity?
- Matthew DiCarali **Nature, Food, & Community: The Art of Producing & Consuming**
Is food simply something we need to survive, or does it have a more significant value? Does it matter how we grow it and how we share it with others, and how can we responsibly and meaningfully?
- Gabby Egidio **The Modern Blindness to the Invisible World**
How has modern materialism impacted humanity's self-understanding and path to happiness? What can be restored from traditional wisdom and the "invisible" higher faculties that transcend our reason and rationality?
- Helena Gunther **Growing Up Too Fast**
What does the "good childhood" look like and how have students of historically underserved backgrounds been robbed of this childhood in American school systems? How can we do better to promote human flourishing for all?
- Grace Jang **Justice & Mercy**
In a perfect system, what does justice and mercy look like?
- Irene Koch **Breaking Through the Noise: Determining Your Purpose in a World of Tedium**
How do we avoid slipping into this objectively good but also objectively "most terrible" lifestyle, where we do what everyone tells us we should do and end up a meaningless cog in the machine?
- Billy Lay **One Love, Many Forms: On the Many Experiences of Love**
Why do we experience love so differently in different contexts within our lives, yet still maintain a foundational idea of one Love?
- Hannah Medsker **Art as Education: Promoting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals**
What is preventing us from achieving a sustainable way of life? How can public art change minds, hearts, and practices about sustainability?
- Grace Metzger **Virtuous Dependence: Why & How We Need Other People**
What do we lose when we pursue independence alone? What parts of ourselves cannot grow without a proper acceptance of dependence?
- Jason Mitala **The Immediate Sublime**
What is the immediate experience of the sublime, an emotion that evokes both positive (awe) and negative (emotionality)? Does such an experience come from God?
- Erin O'Donovan **Reframing Your View of Work to Support Human Flourishing**
How can you positively impact the world through financial work?
- Olivia Pfeiffer **Love's Labour's Lost? The Shifting Relationship between Economic & Domestic Work**
Has the pandemic served as the catalyst for a fundamental paradigm shift in the relationship between work and family life? What has been gained, and what has been lost?
- Jack Roberge **Divine Exile: The Relegation of God to the Wilderness**
Why has the idea that God is to be found in nature, to the exclusion of human creation, come to be, and what is it about our creations that has made this so?
- Chris Saladino **The Reconciliation of Equality under Christianity & the Inequalities Found with Race in the United States**
How does Christianity reconcile equality under God with the inequalities found with race in the United States?
- Bridget Sullivan **The Liberation of the Tortured Artist**
Must the artist be tortured to create great art? And if so, what is the true nature of this torture and are there any alternatives?
- Carrie Sweeney **The Art Form That Keeps "Opening & Opening": Poetry as a Way of Knowing**
How is poetry a way of *knowing*? How has it been a particular way of knowing the fundamental aspects of life (or "the gateways")?
- Mary Swikle **Sacramentality amidst Profanity: The Creative & Erotic Sensibilities of the Human Person**
What do epiphanies signify about the human person? What is the saturating force within epiphanies? Are all epiphanies sacramental? Are they necessarily erotic?



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2021 SENIOR ESSAYS

- Robert Bulka **The Thrasymachus Effect: Personal and Political Effects of Philosophical Relativism**
What are the root causes, personal and political effects, and solutions to our twenty-first century epistemical crisis?
- Gabriel Calvo **Divine Erotics: Whether God Loves Us Erotically**
Can we imagine eros without lack?
- Declan Carolan **The Limits of Human Design: Robert Moses, the Levitt brothers, and the New Cities**
What do Levittown and New York City tell us about the limits of human design?
- Andrew D'Onofrio **Neat Little Boxes: The Dangers and Shortcomings of Categorization**
Have statistics gone too far?
- Erin Fabian **Ordinary World: How Can Heaven Be Made Out of the Hell of Other People?**
What is the point of the despair and anxiety we suffer by nature of being human? How do we go about healing? Can we?
- John Greene **Recovering Charity: Contemplation in Caritas**
What is service (caritas) and what role does contemplation (leisure) play in it?
- Logan Khelil **The Other Side of Despair**
What exactly is the other side of despair? How do we navigate and overcome despair in our lives to find the 'beginning' of life?
- Corey Kuipers **In View of Shalom: Analyzing Political Forgiveness through a Religious Lens**
Is political forgiveness possible, or even desirable?
- Casey O'Donnell **The Song of Creation: A Divine Love Song Transposed**
How would you characterize 'the song' that all of creation is singing? What is the purpose of created beauty and what is the nature of the relationship between the material and the immaterial?
- Jessica Sardina **Beyond Allyship: The Radical Transformation of Friendship**
What does it take for us to go beyond ourselves and to realize our liberation is profoundly interconnected?
- Dominic Sceski **Mysterium Orationis: The Christian's Approach to Understanding Petitionary Prayer**
How does intercessory prayer actually "work"?
- Bruno Shiffman **From Naïve Faith to Mature Hope: Rejecting Flawed Rationalizations of Evil**
What is the proper response to an existence in which evil, both natural and moral, occurs often and in ways that seem senseless to us?
- Bernard Zitzewitz **Preserving the White Light: A Catholic Understanding of Knowledge and the Technocratic Paradigm Through the Lens of J.R.R. Tolkien**
Does Tolkien serve as a good case study for the political, economic, and ecological critiques presented by *Laudato Si'* and Wendell Berry?



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2020 SENIOR ESSAYS

- Caroline Arnold ***Insignes Pietate Viri: Virgil, Augustine, and Dante on the Virtue of Piety***
What is piety? How does Christian revelation change our understanding of true piety, and why?
- Gina Arnold **Love and Dating on the College Campus**
To what extent has dating on the college campus become dysfunctional and how might it be transformed for a better future?
- Molly Bonini **Exploring Restlessness through *Dancing After Hours***
How do we seek to still our restless hearts if not through spirituality?
- Abigail Carr **Finding Fullness in the True Self: When the Seeds of Christ Strip the False Self Away**
What are the limitations of only living in the false self?
- Quinn Dang **On Humility and Beauty: Servitude in Excellence**
Where is the proper place of human being in this reality?
- Marikate Des Rosiers **On Despair and Relationality**
How do we navigate the ceaseless flow of our temporal life?
- Christina Dietzler **Tilling Soil in the Human Heart and Mind: Recovering the Ultimate Questions that Dispose Us Toward Seeking to Know and Love God**
If "the desire for God is written in the human heart," what causes us to forget, overlook or reject this reality?
- Ashley Hock **Controlling Consumerism: Labor as a Mean to a Useless End**
How has modernity shaped our conception of work? How should we think about work in order to create a better society?
- Connor Kovacs **A Search for a Happiness**
What is our final end?
- Timothy Long **Even the Mercy of the Lord Burns: Violence, Distortion, and Grace in Flannery O'Connor, Jacques Maritain, and Karl Barth**
What is the strange relationship between violence and grace in Flannery O'Connor's fiction?
- Chaisen Petrino **Know Thyself: It's Complicated**
Can we fully know ourselves?
- Felicity Petruzzi **And Other Stars**
What is it like to be on the cusp of independent life?
- Hannah Rao **The Call to Holiness: Lessons from Irish Saints**
What do early Irish saints have to teach us about the call to holiness?
- Aidan Riess **The Philosophical Roots of our Ecological Crisis**
How has the impoverished view of reality present in modern philosophical thought led to what Pope Francis describes as the "Technocratic Paradigm?"
- Kendall Smith **The Quest for Joy Through Aspirations and Vocations**
What are the true values of work and vocation as they relate to human happiness?
- Timothy Warren **Unplugged: An Examination of Digital and Physical Escapism**
What are the different ways we escape from reality? Is one better or worse for our flourishing?
- Rebecca Zalar **Love is All: The Different Dimensions and Intricacies of Humanity's Most Intense Emotion**
What kinds of love create a life well lived?



2019 SENIOR ESSAYS

- Jessica Alhanouch **Justice, Sin, and Forgiveness in *The Brothers Karamazov* and the American Justice System**
What is justice really? Why is justice so hard to figure out?
- Dartanyan Edmonds **The Gift of the Beatific Vision: A Thomist View of Nature and Grace**
What is the relationship between nature and grace like? How should we understand this relationship with respect to man's last end, which is the vision of God?
- Matthew Faller **A String of Minor Graces**
What was my path of intellectual transformation through college—in poemetic memory?
- Katherine Hayes **Learning to Help: Theological Perspectives of Suffering and Humanitarian Aid**
How should theological perspectives of suffering inform our humanitarian responses to suffering?
- Katherine Hodskins **The Human Person and the *Metaxu*: On the Meaning of “Home” in the Mobile, Modern World**
In an age of mobility, how does the proposed nature of man as a being “in the between” interact with the meaning of “home”?
- Ted Holleran **The Decline, Death, and Dragging Behind the Chariot of the University**
What is the University and what ought it be? What would it mean for the University to achieve its ultimate goal most effectively?
- Evan Jenkins **The Heart and the Head: The Quintessential Nature of the Emergency Medical and Critical Care Provider**
What does it mean to be human and practice emergency medicine/critical care? How does one best protect one's humanity when confronted with the challenges of emergency medicine?
- Emily LaPorte **Experience and Experiential Knowledge for Understanding a Theological World**
How does our knowledge of the world shape our perceptions of and experiences in our world? How can these two kinds of knowledge together help us to understand hard life realities?
- Jonathan Lindley **Grace in Death**
Is there such a thing as a 'good death'? What role does grace play in death and can it enhance the goodness of dying?
- Abigail Morehouse **Catholic Femininity and the Beloved: Why We Deserve More than Feminism**
Why is the Catholic church's understanding of femininity still relevant (and now more vital than ever) in understanding who we are as women? Why does feminism fall short?
- Colleen O'Brien **Bringing Mindfulness to Work to Create an Enjoyable Experience Similar to That Found in Leisure**
What qualities are found in the type of work that is most conducive to a good human life? Can we alter our attitude toward work so as to make any type of work enjoyable and similar to leisure activities?
- Emma Poley **Fantasy and Performance: A Study of Otherworldly Literature and the Sub-Creative Art**
What is the human good of otherworldly literature? If you could get the same effect out of “realistic” literature, why write fantasy? Who, or what, on earth is a sub-creator?
- Jeremy Puntel **The Restless Heart of Hip Hop**
How can Kendrick Lamar's contribution to the musical and literary form of hip hop be characterized? How does that contribution match up with Augustinian insights into confession, psychology, and politics?
- Sean Rodgers **Abusive Ideology and Faith: Walking the Ruins of Close-mindedness and Looking Beyond**
When it comes down to it, is there a difference between ideology and faith? If so, how does that difference pan out at the level of the personal encounter?
- Keri Salanik **A Finite Encounter with the Infinite: The Story of Conversion**
How does God, who is beyond all comprehension, communicate to humans as finite beings in a finite world and how should one respond to the call?
- Lila Samuelson **The Shaping of You: An Introspective Look at Grief and the Good Life**
How is grief integral to the human experience?
- Margaret Shield **Living Liturgically: A Look at Living In-Between the Mundane and the Extraordinary**
What is the relationship between the ordinary tedium of daily life and the extraordinary?
- Matthew Southerton **The Unholy Trinity: On the Dangerous Presence of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism in Christian Culture**
What is moralistic therapeutic deism, why is it insufficient as form of Christianity, and how can we overcome it?
- Nicole Stefan **Relationships: The Power of Human Connection to Overcome Personal Struggle**
What role do relationships play in our life path?
- MaryKate Winter **“God Meets Us Where We Are”: Understanding Home as Sacred Space**
How can Belden Lane's axioms of sacred space inform an account of home that maintains the significance of place while allowing for multiple experiences of home?
- James Wroblewski **“Why do that to yourself?” My Experience of (Happily) Living My Life as a Young, Gay, Catholic**
Why is it so remarkable to so many in today's society for a young gay man to willingly embrace his Catholic faith?



2018 SENIOR ESSAYS

- Antoinette Arndt **The Art of Suffering**
Can we make sense of the plight of human suffering? How do we teach ourselves to see the good, even in the most desperate of times?
- Blaire Bernstein **The Nature of Cruelty: Spectators, Participants, and Casualties**
What is the role of observing cruelty in the human experience? How does our participation in institutions that perpetuate cruelty affect our ability to be virtuous?
- Eliza Clark **The Experience of Homelessness in Philadelphia**
What is human dignity in relation to the experience of homelessness? Is human dignity upheld on the streets or within the social good services available in Philadelphia?
- Briana Connolly **Ambition in Political Life**
What kind of ambition is proper in politics? How can great historical figures serve as a model for virtuous ambition?
- Nazalie Doghramadjian **Is Knowledge for You? Epistemic Injustice and Worldbuilding**
How does epistemic injustice and intellectual segregation shape the type of knowledge some do or do not cultivate?
- Morgan Hazel **...But Why?: The Necessity of a Humanities Based Education in an Increasingly Competitive Society**
How can an education centered around the values of the Humanities positively influence our society?
- Patrick Hudak **Acedia, Psychopathology, and the Human Person: Exploring Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer* and the Necessity of Meaning**
How can psychological ailment be understood within the realm of spirituality? More specifically, in what ways is the sin of acedia, "a sadness about the spiritual good," relevant to understanding mental illness as a human phenomenon?
- Simran Kripalani **Death and Dying: The Literature, Philosophy, & Practices of Adult & Pediatric End-of-life Care**
Can you ever die a "good death," and, if so, what factors contribute to dying a "good death"? Does this change in the pediatric setting? How can healthcare professionals aid in end-of-life care?
- Jordan McDonald **The Tension of Technology: How Technological Progress Has Altered the Course of the Environment and Humanity**
With society's continued push towards technological progress, has the depletion and neglect of the natural world hindered the human person's ability to live the good life?
- David Miranda **Beauty and Restlessness: The Human Struggle Against, and Reconciliation With, Epiphany and Divine Ascent**
What is the role of beauty in the human engagement of restlessness for God? Why is it that humans struggle to properly orient themselves to earthly and divine beauty?
- Laura Spence **The Still Point of the Turning World: T. S. Eliot, Wendell Berry, and Memory**
What is the role of memory in a human life? Does Hannah Coulter's intensely nostalgic vision of the world hold her hostage or deepen her understanding of her relationship with family and place?
- Ethan Swain **God With Us: The Eucharist and Human Deification**
Can the theological concept of deification provide us with a deeper understanding, reverence, and awe, for the gift of the Eucharist and its effects?
- Vaishnavi Warriar **The (Sacred) Sound of Music: Music as a Catalyst for Spiritual Transcendence**
Can music initiate or intensify spiritual experiences, helping us understand the divine in a more wholesome way within boundaries of religion?
- Rebecca Walters **From Genesis to the Gospel of John: Biblical Themes and their Key Passages**
How can one use certain passages to highlight central themes of the Bible?
- Elizabeth Williams **Universal Particularities: Exploring Cultural-Linguistic Understandings of Human Rights in the United States and Italy**
International human rights law attempts to create "universal" legislation. Can philology help us understand cultures and languages in an attempt to pursue the universal human good?



2017 SENIOR ESSAYS

- Eric Aldieri **“Where Time and Eternity Spatter Each Other with Foam”**: Signs of the Sacred and the Beautiful Impossibility of Home
How can music and narrative cultivate an *apprenticeship* to signs of the divine which lie within otherwise profane, material objects?
- Gabriella Berman **The Family in Crisis: John Locke, the Contraceptive Mentality, and a Christological Response**
How does our understanding of marriage reflect our understanding of the human person?
- Luke Bozich **Transposition through Travel: Understanding Middle Earth through the Experience of Architecture and the Other**
How do the observations on travel to foreign lands and architectural forms and spaces help to heighten one's understanding of the world?
- Trevor Davis **On Virtuous Memory: Properly Aligning Present with Past**
How can we realize a life guided by virtuous memory in a culturally broken age?
- Stephanie Edwards **Is Contemplation Enough?**
If the *telos* of human life is to exist in a multi-faceted *Eudaimonia*, what different goods or values constitute this and how are they ordered?
- Paul Elhallal **“Righteousness and bliss shall kiss one another”**: The Reconciliation of Justice and Mercy through the Paschal Mystery
How is the apparent contradiction between justice and mercy reconciled within the sacramental life of the Church?
- Luke Hensley **“A Priceless Treasure”**: Death, Justice, and the Revitalization of Ethics in *The Brothers Karamazov*
How can a person be both guiltless and guilty at the same time? What determines “guilt”?
- Nicole Kim **Proper *Eudaimonia*: The Struggle between Art, Beauty, and Humanity**
If beauty exists in the world through art, how is it possible to see well in such a world where art is used as a mechanism of oppression in society?
- Lauren Kloss **Literary Synesthesia and the Creation of Wonder**
With reference to the phenomenon of synesthesia, how does literature helps us break conventional notions and create wonder/radical amazement?
- Madeleine Messinger **Till We Have Love: An Exploration of Love and Deification in C.S. Lewis’s *Till We Have Faces***
Can both beauty and dread be ascribed to the divine? Furthermore, how can this help us understand the relationship of the human and the divine?
- Isabel Nelson **Manners and Morals in *Mansfield Park*: Religion and Transcendence in Jane Austen**
What is the role of religion according to the characters of *Mansfield Park*, and is their account satisfying? What should be the relationship between religion and literature?
- Regina Paparo **Altruism vs. Love: The Case for a Christian Understanding of Service**
What is the relationship between selflessness and altruism?
- Bella Perrino **Conscious Capitalism: Locating Ourselves within a Material World**
Can we reconcile community as “the vital activity of communizing” with modern capitalism?
- Connor Ritchie **Developing a Porosity for *Caritas*: An Exploration into Theology, Literature, and Philosophy to Witness Its Supreme Value**
Giving due to tradition, literature, and philosophy, what is *caritas*, how does one personify it, and what is its metaphysical value?
- Katie Stepanek **“The Inconsolable Secret”**: Uncovering Joy as Hidden in C.S. Lewis’ *Till We Have Faces*
Should we expect Joy to be the primary interpretive key for C.S. Lewis’s writing, especially for his self-proclaimed masterpiece *Till We Have Faces*?
- Tony Triggiano **Tasting Italy: Pursuing the Good of Italian Cuisine**
Looking at the case of Italy and Italian culture, under what cultural and societal conditions does cuisine ennoble man’s state, bringing him to this level of spiritual appetite and satiety?
- Emily Wilson **“The Spirit of Celebration”**: Reclaiming Leisure and Liturgy amid Postmodern Busyness
How can the human person reclaim space for leisure and celebration?
- Matthew Zarenkiewicz **What Is to Be Done?: Religion and Politics in the U.S.**
How should religious speech be used in political conversations in the United States?



2016 SENIOR PROJECTS

- Amanda Cialino **Markets Over Relationship? Human Dignity and the Economic Way of Thinking**
What role does economic thinking play in human relationships, and more specifically, those formed in the context of service?
- Cecilia Franko **How Technology Has Replaced Our Lost Community**
With the rise of capitalism, how have society and community been negatively impacted? Does this effect modern architecture?
- Olivia Hamilton **Communitas: How Spaces Shape Community at Villanova**
How do architecture and feelings of community intersect? How does community manifest itself through the buildings and spaces at Villanova?
- Bernard Jacobson **Poor Gods: The Artist as Divine Imitator**
How does man's desire to create art reflect his relationship with God?
- Ali Laird **Sticky Little Leaves: Non-Locality, Non-Euclidian Geometry, and Positive Knowing in *The Brothers Karamazov***
If chaos theory suggests that stability arises in a world ruled by entropy, can we affirm a kind of order in tragedy, without negating the reality of suffering?
- John Liberatore **"Taking me seriously": The Unheard Mind of the Emerging Adult**
What is the significance of the journey that is the Emerging Adulthood? How is mentorship of significant positive impact on the journeying emerging adult?
- Katrina Marks **The Meaning of Memory: A Philosophy of Autobiography**
How does the human person make meaning through the narratives of memories? How do memories challenge what the human person understands as reality?
- Caitlin Mitchell **Difficult Conversations: Doctor Patient Conversations about Death and the Dying Process**
How do the difficult conversations we have with loved ones shape the conversations we have with doctors, and how should doctors have these difficult conversations?
- Ann Pollack **Human Free Will and the Nature of God**
Does the omniscient and omnipotent nature of God limit the human captivity for free will? How is human free will compatible with the Christian conception of God?
- Mary Frances Roth **What Does It Mean To Do Fulfilling Work?**
What is meaningful work?
- Adam Vincent **The Baptism of *Homo Economicus***
If humanity is doomed to its worst expectations for itself, how can theological visions of human nature support alternative economic systems?
- Kate Walsh **Instead of Tears, Give Deeds: Anger as a Positive Political Emotion**
Do modern people simply not believe in justice? Why are so many not moved to do what they can?
- Emily Walthouse **Sometimes the Answers are Simple**
What role can the concept of simplicity play in combating the diagnosis of modernity as "everybody's disease" in Wendell Berry's *Hannah Coulter*?
- Jennifer White **Beauty in the Face of Tragedy**
Is it possible to possess a vocation to pursue beauty in a tragic world or is to do so a dereliction of sacred duty to mankind?
- Hindley Williams **Awe in the Stars: "There Will Be Time"**
What is the role of awe in the human life? What is the effect of living without awe?