

OBSCULTA THEOLOGICAL ESSAY CONTEST
SAINT JOHN'S SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY•SEMINARY

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Saint John's School of Theology•Seminary's *Obsculta* essay contest is open to any college junior or senior. The winning essay will receive a **\$500 cash prize**, a **\$6,000 scholarship** to the School of Theology•Seminary, and be **published in *Obsculta***, the school's student journal.

With this essay contest we hope to recognize and promote theology in the spirit of, *obscurta*, listening with the ear of the heart, the opening phrase of the Rule of Benedict that has shaped the life and spirituality of Benedictines around the world for over 1,500 years. This simple admonition shapes not only the life of the monastic community at Saint John's but also the way we do our theology and preparation for ministry. In a world where people too often speak first and ask questions later, we seek to listen—listen for the voice of the Spirit in Scripture, tradition, each other and the world. Out of this listening we speak that word of God in a way we hope can be heard in and even inspire the world in which we live today.

Eligibility

- The contest is open to any current college juniors or seniors regardless of age or major. It is not limited only to schools receiving letters or other communications announcing the contest and inviting submissions.
- Students who completed their studies mid-year (e.g. in December) are eligible to submit an essay in the following spring as long as they were enrolled in at least one course for their baccalaureate degree in the fall.
- Students may submit only one essay per year. Essays may be submitted in both the Junior and Senior years with the exception of the winning student, who is not eligible to submit a second essay.

Requirements

- Essays may be on any topic of Christian theology. This includes studies of non-Christian religions as long as there is a connection or comparison to Christianity and pastoral or practical theology as well as disciplines such as scripture, history, systematic, liturgy, ethics.
- Students can submit papers written for academic coursework or newly written papers. All submissions must be legally publishable by the School of Theology•Seminary.
- Papers must be no more than 15 pages or 4,000 words, whichever is less. They must be in 12 point font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* and *Liturgical Press Style Guide*, Seventh Edition.
- Papers must be submitted in electronic format, either as a Word document or a PDF file, to obscultaprize@csbsju.edu.
- Papers must be received by the deadline stated in the annual announcement of the contest. For the current year the deadline is March 1, 2012.

- Submissions must include a cover page with the title of the paper, a 30-word summary of the thesis or argument of the paper, the author's full name, the college he or she is currently attending, mailing address, e-mail, and phone number.

Selection Criteria

- The winning essay will be determined on the basis of its quality, creativity, and timeliness. This includes a consideration of the significance of the topic for Christian discipleship as well the discipline of theology; the quality of the research, analysis, and application; the clarity, coherence, and persuasiveness of the argument; and its overall style and readability.
- The winning essay will in some way manifest the Benedictine spirit of *obscura*, listening with the ear of the heart for the voice of the Spirit in Scripture, tradition, each other or the world.
- The winning essay will be determined by the selection committee and the dean of the School of Theology•Seminary. Their decision is final.

Conditions

- The essays submitted remain the intellectual property of the author.
- In accepting the prize, the author of the winning essay gives the School of Theology•Seminary permission to publish the essay in *Obscura* and to use it in whole or in part as well as the author's name and image in promotional materials for the School of Theology•Seminary in various media or formats.
- The cash prize will be paid upon the public announcement of the winner.
- The *Obscura* scholarship is for one year of master's level study in Saint John's School of Theology•Seminary. It is a guaranteed *minimum* scholarship regardless of personal or family financial need. It can be renewed for further full-time if satisfactory progress is made towards a degree and it does not preclude consideration for additional scholarships or financial aid from the School of Theology•Seminary.
- The scholarship is not transferable to any other school or person and cannot be converted to a cash equivalent.
- Receipt of the scholarship requires acceptance for admission to the School of Theology•Seminary through the standard admissions process of the school. The award implies no guarantee of admission to the school.
- Acceptance of the award with the scholarship implies no intention to seek admission to or enroll in the School of Theology•Seminary on the part of the author.
- If no essays are found acceptable for publication in a given year, the School reserves the right not to award a prize that year.
- In the event of differences or discrepancy between the terms and conditions as stated here and any other annual communications or announcements, the terms and conditions stated here and published on the official School of Theology•Seminary website shall prevail.
- Decisions on compliance with these terms and conditions are made by the School of Theology•Seminary and are final.