

Simpson Essay Guidelines

The Kenneth C. Simpson Essay Prize is awarded to a current Northwestern student in any discipline who writes the best essay discussing the influence of Catholic thought or history on a given academic field or understanding. Students are encouraged to submit (or revise and submit) papers written for class assignments, honors papers, or other academic purposes. The winner receives \$1,000 and will present their work at a public lecture.

Guidelines for submission of the essay can be found [here](#). Please contact, Sr. Belinda Monahan by October 15, 2025 if you wish to submit an essay in the 2025-2026 academic year.

Timeline for submission of Simpson Essay Prize

Contact Sr. Belinda with intent of submission	October 15, 2025
200-word synopsis of paper	January 15, 2026
Preliminary bibliography	February 15, 2026
Initial draft of essay	March 15, 2026
Completed draft	April 30, 2026
Essay presentation will be scheduled on a Sunday in May.	

Papers will be read and judged by Sr. Belinda, Fr. Bradley, and up to two additional readers who are chosen for their knowledge of the field the paper represents.

Format

- Minimum 15 pages in length (double spaced)
- Essay must contain an original thesis statement
- Research must be appropriately footnoted and referenced

Papers will be judged on the student's

- Research skills
- Ability to think critically about a topic
- Ability to combine information and ideas into a focused, organized, supported argument
- Ability to write a grammatically, stylistically, and mechanically correct essay
- Ability to document and list sources accurately and usefully