

The Seshat Prize



Philosophy Essay Competition

The Philosophy Department at the University of Memphis is pleased to announce the inaugural Seshat Prize for Spring 2021, thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor. Seshat was the ancient Egyptian goddess of wisdom and writing, and the prize will recognize the convergence of wisdom and writing in an essay. A prize of \$1,250 will be awarded to the best graduate student essay. Two prizes, one of \$700 and one of \$400, will be awarded to the first and second best undergraduate student essays.

The competition is open to all undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled at the University of Memphis, regardless of major. Submissions are due March 22nd, 2021 and prize winners will be announced in April. There will be a reception, adapted to pandemic protocol, honoring the winners and participants. Specific requirements are as follows.

Some Considerations

- Although new work is welcome, you may consider revising and polishing an essay you have already submitted in a course. You are encouraged to work with your professor(s) in doing this.
- NOTE: An essay which has already been published or accepted for publication may not be submitted for this competition.
- Submissions will be run through Turnitin to assure originality and detect plagiarism.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. **Credible Case.** Does the essay make a substantive and persuasive case for its conclusions?
2. **Validity.** Do the arguments and evidence support the essay's conclusions? Do the conclusions address the primary questions posed by the essay?
3. **Writing Quality.** Is the writing clear? Is it easy to read?
4. **Originality.** How original are the essay's contributions to the subject area being discussed in comparison with other published material?
5. **Relevant and Interesting.** Are the main questions addressed by the essay relevant to contemporary issues and does the essay make an interesting contribution to discussions on the topic?

Note: for the graduate student prize, there will be more of an expectation to engage with relevant literature on their topic. Greater weight may also be placed on the originality and credible case criteria.

Submission Format

- Graduate student essay: 3000-5000 words (excluding title and footnotes)
- Undergraduate student essay: 1250-2000 words (excluding title and footnotes)
- Your essay will be refereed following standard anonymization procedures. Your main essay document should not contain the author's name. Any references to the author's own work within the essay should be replaced with "Author" and the year of publication. Remove any reference to the author's name in the document's metadata.
- You should also submit a separate title page. Include your name, email, and essay title in the title page. This will not be sent to the essay referees.
- Email your anonymized main essay and title page documents to Cathy Wilhelm: cwilhelm@memphis.edu