



The Apologetics Award was established in 1994 by a gift from Professors Miles Johnson '47 and Joyce Johnson '50, who intended that the award would “encourage student interest and participation in apologetics, in defending the historic Christian faith.” They also wanted “aspiring writers [to] recognize the vital link between Scripture and this historic faith.”

The Essay Prompt:

Throughout their history, Christians have defended their beliefs through “apologetics” – the attempt to defend religious claims against objections and misrepresentations through rational argument. Topics of Christian apologetics have traditionally included the existence of God as creator, Jesus’ identity and resurrection, the forgiveness of sins, the problem of suffering, and divine justice. These claims are found in the Bible, as well as confessions, like the Apostles’ Creed. How can Christians defend these historic claims rationally? Why do they matter in an increasingly complex world?

Before writing the essay, students should familiarize themselves with the Apostles’ Creed (<http://www.ccel.org/creeds/apostles.creed.html>) and Nicene Creed (<http://www.ccel.org/creeds/nicene.creed.html>), two major statements of Christian belief. These are the core faith claims of Christianity that the essay should defend. The task of this essay is an argumentative one. For that reason, students should approach this essay as an intellectual project. The strength of the evidence and the logic of its organization will be key for writing good essays.

Requirements:

The essay should be 2000-2500 words in length. It should conform to standard conventions of grammar and use a consistent citation style (Chicago, MLA, etc.). It should also follow the GAC Honor Code.

Please submit your essays via email to Professor Thia Cooper (tcooper@gac.edu) by 11:59pm on May 1, 2023. Submissions should be in Word or PDF format.

The winning essay will be selected by faculty from the Gustavus Religion Department. Their decision is final.

The winner will receive a \$500 prize and be recognized at the Honor’s Day convocation next year.