

The Human Journey Seminars: Great Books of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition I  
Paper 3 Assignment: Common Assessment

**Purpose:**

Your prompt for the Common Assessment is as follows:

*Using two to three sources that we have read so far this semester, write a paper explaining how these readings represent perspectives of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition on one of the questions below:*

- a. *Human beings exist in relation to a Triune God*
- b. *God's presence in the world is mediated through nature and reality*
- c. *Faith and reason are compatible*
- d. *The dignity of every human being is inviolable and the commitment to justice for the common good is necessary*

**Understanding the Prompt:**

You have been tasked with using two to three readings to connect to the claims. You are welcome to utilize any readings or prompts that you have previously discussed. The only stipulation is that two of the sources you choose must come from our Course Reader:

“The Allegory of the Cave”, Plato  
Genesis 1-3  
Exodus 19-20  
The Gospel of Matthew  
*The Confessions*, St. Augustine  
*Summa Contra Gentiles*, St. Thomas Aquina  
*Inferno*, Dante Alighieri  
*Purgatorio*, Dante Alighieri  
*Paradiso*, Dante Alighieri

The third reading can be taken from the Course Reader selections or any other reading we have done this semester:

*Ethics*, Books 1 and 8, Aristotle  
Excerpts from *Showings*, Julian of Norwich  
Excerpt from St. Teresa of Ávila  
“Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina of Tuscany”, Galileo Galilei  
“Sermon 87: On the Poverty of Spirit”, Meister Eckhart  
Excerpt from “The Rule of St. Benedict”  
“Saint Francis Preaches to the Birds”  
“The Wife of Bath’s Prologue”, Geoffrey Chaucer

Remember, you are not writing a persuasive essay to convince the reader of any of the four claims; you are looking to identify how these authors interact with the claims: how do they speak to them?; do they contradict any of them, or present varying interpretations of them?; do you see a common trend in a collection of authors?; etc.

### Criteria for Success:

The prompt you will ultimately face lays out 5 expectations for a successful essay, which specify what you will be graded on, below:

*In this five-page essay, you are expected to:*

1. *Identify a clear **thesis** statement*
2. *Use appropriate **content** to illustrate the thesis statement*
3. ***Evaluate/ interpret** the textual evidence that is presented*
4. ***Organize and synthesize** evidence to present a coherent explanation*
5. *Produce a clear, well-organized essay in which sources are cited properly and which conforms to conventions of standard written English*

### Understanding the Criteria:

You are crafting a five-page paper (five full pages, or about 1300 words), with specific requirements. I have attached the grading rubric, which will also be included in your Common Assessment; the five areas in your expectations above correspond with the five categories on the rubric.

When you put your essay together, there are a number of things I will be looking for. First, a clear thesis. As written above, you are looking to link all of the authors that you choose together in some way that connects to the claims. Try to move beyond an average, B-range thesis, don't merely restate the prompt: "Plato and the Gospel of Matthew connect to the claim 'God's presence in the world is mediated through nature and reality'"; this doesn't inform the reader of the larger picture. Rather, reflect on what connects the readings together: "Aristotle's belief in good being the ultimate goal of every society in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and Jesus's preaching about the importance of treating others with respect found in the Bible's Gospel of Matthew demonstrate that every human has dignity which must be upheld in order for the common good". This is a much stronger thesis.

When bringing in content (aka, quotes from the text), there are a number of things to keep in mind. First, you can't talk about these readings without referencing specifics. Merely saying "Aristotle writes about what is good" does not give the reader enough information to understand what you are looking to discuss. Therefore, you need to quote

directly (using quotation marks and parenthetical citations) and/or indirectly (paraphrasing or summarizing but still providing citations). Also, you have to unpack the information you bring in. Don't merely drop quotes in without annotation or explanation. This is the evaluate/interpret portion of the criteria: what does the author say and why is it relevant? Remember to tie everything back to the thesis.

In terms of organization, begin with an introductory paragraph where you set the stage for the discussion: what readings/authors are you discussing, and what is their relationship to the claim you have chosen? The intro paragraph should provide the reader with everything needed to know what to expect. Then, you take several body paragraphs to unpack your discussion. Begin each with a topic sentence that ties back to the thesis and organizes the paragraph. In each one, ensure that you are remaining relevant to the overall purpose of the paper (thesis), and that it all flows logically. Finish the paper with a concluding paragraph that is not a replication of your intro, but rather revisits and summarizes what you have accomplished in your paper. Finally, please don't forget to proofread; grammatical/spelling errors, while not as important as the content you are presenting, indicate a lack of care to the reader. Don't let them detract from the work you put in.

It is also important to note the formatting here. Your essay should be formatted according to MLA guidelines. This means a formal heading (your name, instructor's name, course name, due date); a header (your last name and page number in the top right corner); a title; double spacing throughout the paper; Times New Roman, 12-point font; indented paragraphs; 1-inch margins; and a separate Works Cited page (not included in your final page count, including double-spaced bibliographical citations with hanging indents). If you need additional reminders, you can find all the answers at this resource: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

### **Works Cited:**

You have been asked to include a Works Cited page at the end of your paper. Please utilize the following information for the appropriate sources that you use in your paper. First, if citing from the Course Reader, include the bibliographic information for the book itself, and simply add the specifics for the sections you are bringing in. For example, here is the template for citing readings from the book itself:

[Author's Name and] Sacred Heart University. ["Title of the Reading"]. *The Human Journey Seminars: Great Books in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition: CIT 201*. XanEdu, 2016, [pp. Include the Page Number Range]

Citing a reading found within the book, you include the author first (before the University) and then the title of the reading; finally, add the page numbers that the reading is found on in the course reader. For example, citing Plato would look like this:

Plato and Sacred Heart University. "The Allegory of the Cave". *The Human Journey Seminars: Great Books in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition: CIT 201*. XanEdu, 2016, pp. 1-9.

For items found outside of the course reader, I have provided the citations with the corresponding readings on Blackboard.

### **Process**

Please submit your paper on Blackboard, as a Word document (not a PDF or any other format), by midnight on Dec 9. Let me know if you have any questions.

**CIT Rubric:**

|   | <b>Unacceptable (1)</b>   | <b>Developing (2)</b>  | <b>Proficient (3)</b>  | <b>Exemplary (4)</b>   |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Statement of Thesis</b>                | Lacks a central thesis or thesis is irrelevant, unclear, or self-evident. The goal for this essay is missing or vague.  | States a thesis but it is very weak, general, or vague. The goal of the essay is ambiguous or contradictory.   | States a central thesis but it could be more substantive, clear, or specific. The goal of the essay is not clear.  | States a central thesis that is substantive, insightful, clear, and specific. The goal of this essay is very clear.  |
| <b>Textual Evidence to Support Thesis</b> | Information is taken from the common sources without any explanation or there is no textual evidence.   | Information is taken from the common sources with minimal or inadequate explanation.   | Information is taken from the common sources with only moderate or inconsistent support of the thesis.   | Information is taken from the common sources with thorough, consistent, thoughtful explanation to support the thesis.  |
| <b>Content Development</b>                | Evidence/explanation not organized and not related to the thesis.   | Evidence/explanation not well organized and makes insufficient/inadequate connections to the thesis.   | Evidence/explanation adequately organized makes adequate connections to the thesis but evidence/explanation not synthesized/interpreted to support the thesis.   | Evidence/explanation effectively organized and synthesizes the information and makes meaningful/insightful connections to the thesis.                            |
| <b>Organization and Clarity</b>           | Fails to demonstrate any understanding of thesis and audience; poor organization, lack clarity; paper not organized around coherent paragraphs; paragraphs lack topic sentences; prose is difficult to follow and understand. | Some organization and understanding of thesis and audience, but unbalanced or inconsistent; topic sentences rarely used; inconsistent paragraph development; reader occasionally confused by awkward organization. | Demonstrates some understanding of thesis and audience around generally sound organization of ideas; paragraphs begin with fully developed topic sentences related to the thesis; paper flows logically. | Clear, well-organized essay that demonstrates understanding of thesis and audience; paragraphs begin with fully developed topic sentences related to the thesis. |
| <b>Editing and Manuscript Form</b>        | Paper seriously marred by mistakes in grammar, spelling, and punctuation; essay does not follow   | Paper creates distractions due to spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar errors; writer seems a bit careless.   | Writer uses effective language, rhetoric, and other communication skills; may contain errors that do not detract from the argument.  | Writer creates paper that only contains an occasional minor error of spelling, punctuation and/or grammar; no style or formatting errors, all                    |

|  |                                   |  |  |                                |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
|  | <b>assigned style and format.</b> |  |  | <b>sources properly cited.</b> |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|