

# JAMES MIDDLETON ESSAY PRIZE IN HUMANITIES CRITERIA



1. The Donor, Mr. James Middleton, hereby establishes a series of annual essay prizes in the Humanities at Trent University.
2. The purpose of the prizes is to promote, encourage, and reward undergraduate study in the Humanities. Fundamental to this is the belief that the Humanities are essential to a complete life experience and the ground for any profession. Further, that to have meaning, the results of personal exploration and learning in the Humanities must be shared with a wider public.
3. For the purpose of these prizes, Humanities shall be defined as: Ancient History and Classics, Canadian and European History, Philosophy, and English Literature of Canada and Great Britain.
4. The prizes shall be known as the James Middleton Essay Prize in Humanities.
5. Each prize shall have a cash value of \$600 Canadian currency.
6. Two (2) Prizes shall be awarded annually on a rotating basis on the following schedule of subjects:  
Year 1 – Ancient History & Classics, and Philosophy  
Year 2 – History, and English Literature
7. One prize shall be awarded for the best essay by a second- or third-year undergraduate student for a topic in each of the scheduled subjects as defined.
8. Prizes shall be awarded as the result of a formal competition process.
9. The competition is open to any second- or third-year student pursuing a single- or joint-major Honours undergraduate degree in at least one of the four defined subjects, in accord with the schedule of prizes.
10. Essays shall be submitted and judged on the following timetable:
  - a) April 30, deadline for submission of entries
  - b) May 30, recommendations of Prize Committee to Donor
  - c) June 30, Donor and Committee Decision
  - d) July 15, formal notification to the winners
  - e) Donor to present prizes and host a reception/luncheon to honour the winners in the fall.
11. Essays must be original work of the student submitted as current year work, or in the case of 3<sup>rd</sup> year student's work from either current or 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Given the substantial value of the prizes and their purpose, it is expected that students will want to revise class work to ensure submissions are of the highest quality and reflect the objective of communicating with a wider public audience. Essays written specifically for this contest are also acceptable. Faculty members may encourage and advise individual students as to entry in the competition, and in most cases students should obtain a faculty recommendation for the submission.
12. Essays shall be a minimum of 2,500 words in length, and longer essays are welcome. Essays shall be submitted electronically. Format shall be 12-point type, single-spaced. As papers are judged anonymously, the main title page is not to bear the name of the author; however, a separate detachable cover page must contain the essay title, signature and full name and contact information of the author. Papers submitted to the competition will not be returned.

13. In general, it is expected that the winning essays will be written with the intent to inform and educate a well-read general public. While a high quality of scholarship, with appropriate acknowledgement of sources, is expected, the intention of the Donor is for essays to reflect the considered thinking and opinion of the author, with the writing being an attempt to convey the substance of such personal learning and opinion. As such, this is not to be considered a formal “research paper” but an essay in the traditional sense, and therefore the normal academic apparatus may be kept to a minimum of essential footnotes or internal references. More specifically, essays shall be judged on the following basis:
  - a) Ability to transmit knowledge to a general audience
  - b) Writing quality and style
  - c) Clarity of presentation and argument
  - d) Scholarship
  - e) Originality
14. Submissions are to be made to the Assistant to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Studies, no later than April 30 each year. Submissions will be coded and passed on to the Prize Committee in such a way that the identity of the author is not known to the Committee. The competition will be under the purview of the University’s Scholarship & Bursary Committee.
15. A single Prize Committee, consisting of at least two tenured faculty, shall be appointed on terms established by the Dean of Arts and Science. The appointment of the Chairman and members will consider the need for continuity and coordination between relevant departments and the Donor. The Donor shall be a full voting member of the committee acting as a representative of the well-read general public. Following a process it is free to determine, the Committee shall read and assess each submission, and decide the winning essay in each subject.
16. The Prize Committee may decide not to award a Prize if it is determined no essay of sufficient quality has been submitted.
17. The Committee Chairman shall notify the successful authors in writing by July 15 each year.
18. The Donor shall make annually in the Spring a donation of at least \$1,500 Canadian currency to the University for the purpose of funding the two (2) annual essay prizes in the Humanities, and providing sponsorship for the award luncheon. Additional funds will be provided from time to time with the intention of endowing the prizes.

*Revised February 2011*