First Year Experience 2013 Magis Essay Contest

As part of the events and activities surrounding the First Year Experience, we invite first-year students to submit a 1,000-1,200-word written reflection or 3-5 minute video reflection. A cash prize of $250 will be awarded to the writer of the best, most compelling written essay and $250 to the creator of the best creative reflection video. Prizes will be awarded at the start of the spring semester. The essays themselves (with the authors’ permission) will be posted to the First-Year Reading Experience webpage. Students are limited to one entry per category (written and video). Visit the First Year Experience site for more details.

First Year Experience Site: http://libguides.rockhurst.edu/RUFYETheme

Contest Instructions

Submit a reflective written or video essay that analyzes your experience as a reader of one of the following books:
- Dressmaker of Khair Khana by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon
- The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch
- Touch the Top of the Mountain by Erik Weihenmayer
*all books are available for a week check-out at the Greenlease Library.

Your written/video reflection should answer this question: How has your experience reading this book shaped your understanding of magis and inspired you to pursue magis in your own life?

A successful essay (written or video) will develop a specific, distinctive claim that defines the nature and importance of your reading experience. It will demonstrate this claim through meaningful discussion of your personal experiences and how these experiences relate to some idea recounted in the book. Your essay should be more than a book report; it should demonstrate the impact of the book(s) on your understanding of magis.

Evaluation Criteria

The committee will value essays (written and video) that connect compelling, detailed discussions of the reading experience to the Rockhurst core value magis. Winning essays will also (a) have an engaging and distinct voice, (b) demonstrate the writer/creator is invested in exploring and contemplating the theme of magis, and (c) be carefully edited and proofed.

The committee will be guided by a rubric based on the following criteria:
- **Comprehension**: essay reflects a thorough and nuanced understanding of the book and magis.
• **Originality and creativity:** the writer/creator is resourceful and creative in conducting the discussion; the writer/creator reveals a flexible, open, exploratory sensibility, and is not afraid to take chances.

• **Development:** The ideas are clearly explained and developed through a coherent and easily understood progression; ideas ultimately advance a meaningful point about the individual reading experience and the reader’s understanding of the core value.

• **Insight:** The writer/creator not only describes the reading experience, but also strengthens that discussion with insight, reflection, and interpretation.

• **Personal Voice:** The writer/creator exhibits a distinctive sense of voice in managing and presenting the material.

• **Language Use:** The writer displays skill in word choice and sentence structure, using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The creator shows skill in clearly communicating his or her views through video editing.

• **Length:** Meets length criteria – 1,000-1,200 words for written essays and 3-5 minutes for video essays.

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**Submission Instructions**

• The contest is open to all first-year students enrolled at Rockhurst University for the first time beginning in August 2013.

• Essays (written and video) must be new compositions specifically for the First Year Experience 2013 Magis Essay Contest.

• Submissions should be limited to one entry per category (written or video).

• Essays should be given a title.

• The student’s name should not appear on the written essay. Attach a separate sheet with a brief bio (100 words maximum), the word count, and the appropriate contact information: name, Rockhurst email address, phone number.

• Upload video to a web-based video hosting site and share the hyperlink in an email to Danielle Theiss. For example, Youtube, VIMEO, or DropBox.

Send the written essay as an email attachment (in Word format) and the video url to danielle.theiss@rockhurst.edu.

Please type “First Year Experience 2013 Magis Essay Contest” in the message subject line. Each author/creator will receive a confirmation email indicating that the essay or video was received.

**Contact Information**

Danielle Theiss, Research, Learning and Assessment Services Librarian; 816-501-4189; danielle.theiss@rockhurst.edu

**The DEADLINE for entries is Monday, December 2, 2013.**