

PAPER SUBMISSION DETAILS

What to Examine: The conference organizers have selected three very different short stories as the focus of the HSC, each one a challenging, humorous, and stark window into the heart of the Southern Renaissance. The stories are as follows:

1. “A Good Man is Hard to Find”
2. “Good Country People”
3. “Revelation”

Participants are encouraged to read *all the stories* in preparation for writing an essay of approximately 1500 – 2000 words on one of them, using the prompts given below. The papers should represent the student-author’s individual writing and insight about the story which interests him or her and should conform to the generally accepted MLA format. A few specifics about a paper’s format are highlighted below:

- A. All papers should be double-spaced with margins of 1” on all sides
- B. All should use a standard font such as *Times New Roman*, and only 12 pt. type
- C. All submissions should be sent ELECTRONICALLY to gnied@cistercian.org
- D. All electronic submissions should use one of the following: .doc / .docx / .pdf
- E. The obligatory cover sheet should include the following information:
 - 1: Name of student
 - 2: Title of essay
 - 3: Name of school which the student attends
 - 4: Contact e-mail address of the faculty sponsor

While students are encouraged to make use of the large body of scholarly, secondary literature, this is NOT a requirement for making a submission. When a student uses secondary resources, the standard MLA format should be used.

NB: All ‘footnotes’ should be given as Parenthetical Documentation within the body of the paper and the ‘bibliography’ should be in the form of a separate Works Cited page.

Essay Question Prompts

I. “A Good Man is Hard to Find” - This short story is filled with a number of conversations, each of which illuminates the characters who speak to, or better, speak *at* each other: The Grandmother and Bailey (her son); the children (June Star and John Wesley) and The Grandmother; The Misfit and his accomplices (Bobby Lee and Hiram); and the longest conversation at the end of the story between The Misfit and the Grandmother. In your essay select one (or more) of these conversations and discuss how they illuminate but also address some of the larger issues which O’Connor examines in this tale of mayhem and Black Comedy.

II. “Good Country People”- From her own life story as well as from her collected letters

found in *The Habit of Being*, Flannery O'Connor emerges as an intellectual who was deeply involved in the religious, ethical, and political questions of her day. Curiously, however, *intellectuals* in her stories are frequently in for a hard time, whatever their moral, economic, or philosophic positions might be. In your essay, select two or three of these 'intellectual ideas' which are espoused by Manley Pointer or Joy/Hulga and comment on how these ideas help to determine the tragi-comic outcome of the story. While your essay may range over any part of the story, you may find the last conversation that Joy/Hulga has with Manley Pointer in the loft of the barn to be particularly instructive about the perils of being an intellectual of any kind in Flannery O'Connor's world.

III. "Revelation" – In this short story completed shortly before her death, O'Connor presents the reader with a finely crafted character named Ruby Turpin: middle class, middle-aged, and middle-of-the-road in all her opinions (or so she thinks)! Yet this 'good Christian woman' is forced to confront an intractable problem when she asks God, "How am I Christian and a warthog from hell?" Using those parts of the story which you find most interesting, examine how Ruby *can, indeed, really be* a 'Christian' yet simultaneously, 'a warthog from Hell.' The crazed insight of Mary Grace is, indeed, something Ruby simply cannot exorcise from her mind when she leaves the doctor's office – much as she would like to. In concluding your essay, you may want to reflect on whether O'Connor provides either Ruby Turpin or the reader with any kind of provisional answer to this central question.

Submission Deadline: The HSC is scheduled for Thursday, November 6, 2014. Submissions should be received by Friday October 17, 2014. Late papers will not be considered. E-mail confirmation will be given for all received papers.

Copyright: Students will retain the copyright of any submitted papers. However, for the purposes of the HSC, any submission may be reproduced in whole or in part for use during the proceedings of November 6, 2014, and in preparation for it.

Further Questions: During the period before the final submission date, all questions about the HSC should be directed to the chair of the English Department at gnied@cistercian.org.