COLLOQUY

A CONVERSATION WITH GUTENBERG COLLEGE

Winter 2020

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From the President

We own our own home! God has been especially gracious to Gutenberg College by raising up a group of incredible supporters who allowed us to repurchase the building at 1883 University Street last fall.

In 2015, to overcome financial difficulties, a small group of board members leveraged their good credit to purchase the building. They then generously leased the building back to the college allowing us to seamlessly continue our operations. They graciously and patiently held the building until we had the means to repurchase it, gaining no financial benefit for themselves, and passing on the intervening increase in property value to the college. We owe these men and women a deep debt of gratitude for their incredible kindness in a time of need.

In the summer and early fall of 2019, new friends of the college pooled their resources, both retirement and cash, to raise a loan for the college of $850,000. This loan, with an effective interest rate of 3.17%, is far better than any loan commercially available and benefits the college greatly. These friends also benefit by having a low-risk, interest-yielding investment.

With the loan, Gutenberg College was able to repurchase the building from the former owners. The transaction was completed in September, and we are now the very proud and grateful owners.

Financial and real estate matters may not be the most exciting aspects of the college, but they are nevertheless critical. This opportunity has been particularly beneficial to us by putting us in a much stronger financial position. We are incredibly grateful to God and all of those who have stepped up and helped us through these transactions.

The Problem of Love

Chris Alderman

I heard an old religious man
But yesternight declare
That he had found a text to prove
That only God, my dear,
Could love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair.

— W. B. Yeats, "For Anne Gregory"

Every Friday afternoon at Gutenberg College, students and tutors gather to discuss topics that come up in Western Civilization during the week. Recently, the following question arose in response to Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan,* a work of political philosophy that takes a notoriously dim view of human nature: Is Hobbes right in claiming that we are incapable of acting selflessly? In the final analysis, is even a Christian's "love" for others nothing more than an enlightened love of self, shown perhaps "in hope of reward in heaven"?[1] This is an age-old question, of course—older than Hobbes, older than the Scholasticism to which Hobbes was responding—but one that requires serious consideration from all of us in light of the nature and importance of Christian love.

The problem of love might be stated in the form of a syllogism:

- We are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves ("Golden Rule": Mt. 22:39, Lev. 19:18, etc.).
- To love our neighbors is to treat them as we ourselves wish to be treated (Mt. 7:12).
- We wish to be loved "for ourselves alone," not out of any ulterior motive.
- To love our neighbors on command is to love them out of an ulterior motive and thus not to treat them as we ourselves wish to be treated.
- Therefore, to love our neighbors on command is not truly to love them.

For those who think they detect a hint of sophistry in this formulation of the problem, let me try a different one:

- We are commanded to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind ("Great Commandment": Mt. 22:37, Deut. 6:5).
- If we love God out of a desire for eternal life, do we truly love Him?

To attempt to do much more in this short essay than trace the contours of the problem as it presented itself to me would be presumptuous. Not only is the problem of Christian love old and complex, but I am neither a theologian nor a philosopher, except insofar as I have been unable to avoid grappling at some level with theological and even philosophical issues simply by virtue of being a Christian. Therefore, I will merely look briefly at the scriptural basis of the problem, examine two influential Christian views of it, and conclude with some personal thoughts.

Scriptural Basis for the Problem of Love

Love is the Christian virtue *par excellence*. Its importance cannot be overstated. Love, Jesus says, is the foundation of the Law (Mt. 22:40). Love is the Law's fulfillment, Paul writes to the Galatians (5:14). What is more, love is so essential to who God is that John can write: "God *is* love" (1 Jn. 4:8).[2] And what is love? The "Golden Rule" provides a formal definition, and Paul gives us this interesting description of love in I Corinthians

13:5 (NIV): "it is not self-seeking." More important than any definition or description, however, is the exemplification of love in Jesus' self-sacrifice. Again and again, we see love epitomized in the same fashion: "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends" (Jn. 15:13). "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25). From these verses, we can make two important observations: 1) love involves the lover's acting on behalf of others ("his friends," "us," "her") and 2) love *costs* the lover, the greatest love costing him most ("his life," "himself"). Here it might be reasonable to conclude that Christian love, modeled on God's love in Christ, is antithetical to the self-love that Hobbes sees driving all human activity.

If it were only a question of adjudicating between the Bible and Hobbes, our task would be relatively simple. Unfortunately, in this matter as in so many others, the scriptural witness itself is complex. Many of Jesus' messages appeal naturally to our self-interest, whether as promises of reward or warnings of punishment. If we care for the hungry, thirsty, etc., we shall have "eternal life"; if we do not, "eternal fire" (Mt. 25:31-46). Surely this is all the reason one needs to treat others mercifully, we might say. True, an important feature of this account of the Final Judgment is the fact that those who have done good are surprised by their reward, meaning they have not acted with that reward in view; but why would Jesus speak of rewards and punishments at all if he did not wish us to be motivated by them? On the face of it, it might seem that the Bible condones—if not advocates—a kind of "ethical egoism," according to which each of us is always justified in acting in his own best interest.[3] Indeed, many of the parables depict salvation as though it were simply the return on a good investment. (See especially Mt. 13:44-46.) The only difference between one who lays up for himself treasures on earth and one who lays up for himself treasures in heaven seems to be that the latter has better business sense (Mt. 6:19-21). Each of the two is fundamentally interested in the same thing: laying up treasures for himself. From this perspective, Christian love would be a sort of enlightened self-love not incompatible with Hobbes's view of human nature.

Two Theological Views of the Problem of Love

We might restate the problem of love yet again as follows: What is the proper relation between love of God, love of neighbor, and love of self?

This is not an exegetical so much as a theological question. Let us therefore turn to two influential Christian theologies of love: that of medieval Christians in the West and that of Martin Luther. In the following simplified account, I rely primarily on the first volume of American philosopher Irving Singer's trilogy *The Nature of Love,*[4] which traces the development of love as an ideal from Plato to Luther. Singer, who died in 2015 after more than fifty years at MIT, was not a Christian, but he exhibits a genuine appreciation for the Judeo-Christian tradition inasmuch as it "first makes the love of persons into a philosophical concept" (270). He shows both the patience for thorny theological questions and the ability to penetrate to the heart of them. Most importantly, perhaps, he is an "outsider" without theological commitments who may help us to a broader understanding of the issues at stake (314).

The first theology of the problem of love may be characterized as that of medieval Christianity in the West, taking its basic shape with Augustine (354–430 AD) and receiving its most systematic form with Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274 AD). Like Plato and Aristotle before them, the medievals believed that it is human nature to do all things out of a desire or "love" (Greek *eros*) for happiness (164). The medievals differ from the Greeks in identifying the source of this happiness with a person (God) rather than an abstraction (the Good) and in denying that we are capable of achieving it on our own. Because we are finite creatures, our love for happiness is naturally misdirected at finite things, which cannot satisfy us (316). We need God to redirect our love toward its true object, not only by showing us what to love but also by supernaturally enabling us to love it. Thus Augustine distinguishes between two types of self-love: *caritas* (directed toward God and neighbor) and *cupiditas* (directed toward the world and temporal things) (316). Only *caritas*—natural self-love enlightened and transformed by the Holy Spirit—would meet the requirements for Christian love.

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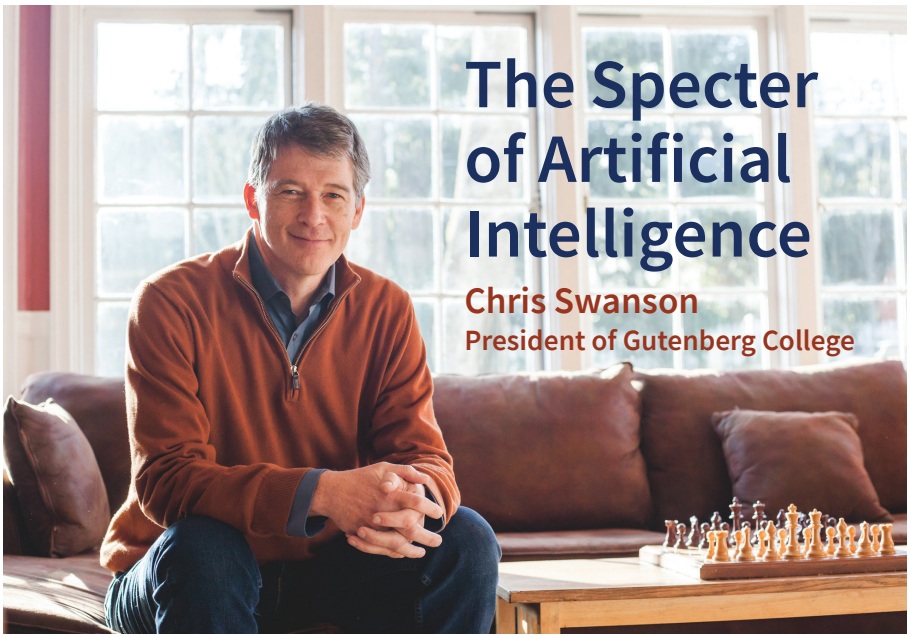


The Specter of Artificial Intelligence

Chris Swanson
President of Gutenberg College

The role of technology comes up frequently as a topic of conversation at Gutenberg. Technological advances have precipitated some of the most significant cultural transformations in history, the industrial revolution being an example. The scientific/industrial revolution led to urbanization, rapid increases in population, the Enlightenment, and the demise of feudalism.

A similar technological revolution is occurring now: the computer revolution. Whether it be energy production, weather forecasting, manufacturing, or business and finance, no aspect of our life has not been profoundly touched by the computer. We all use smart phones, internet, social media, and YouTube every day; they have become a staple of modern life. However, the social impacts of our rapidly changing technology are still unfolding.

As enormous as these changes have been, another computer technology is now developing that may have even greater impact on our world: artificial intelligence (AI). I recently gave a talk on AI at one of our community classes and learned a great deal about the types of influences it is likely to have, and they are profound. But to make AI effective, computer programs need lots of data from which to "learn." Medical records are used to create AI diagnoses. Financial data is used to find fraud. Photographic data is required for AI facial recognition. This puts huge data companies, such as Google and Facebook in the United States and those of the Chinese government, at the forefront of AI research and applications. Suffice it to say, these companies and a foreign government may not have our best interests in mind.

The author who has most impacted my thinking on technology is Jacques Ellul, who wrote *The Technological Society* (a book we read at Gutenberg) in 1954. Even though much of the book is dated, his analysis is as cogent now as it was then. He argued that our culture has elevated technological efficiency as the highest value in social, political, and economic realms. The drive for efficiency reorganizes the hierarchy of values, demoting such human values as love, care, community, and connection. As AI ramps up, there will undoubtedly be many significant changes. And I think it is safe to say that AI programs or machines that maximize efficiency will be adopted.

While I have some concerns about the power that those who use AI will wield, I believe that the greater threat is that we continue to lose sight of what it means to be human, specifically creatures of a loving God. The technology of AI may offer great advances, but the real question is whether the benefits outweigh the harms. In conclusion, I offer an encouragement. Life is about God, not efficiency. We would do well to think carefully about whether our use of technology honors or dishonors the values and commands of God.

The Problem of Love

Continued from page 3

This view was adapted in influential ways by Bernard of Clairvaux (c. 1090–1153 AD), an abbot and theologian who identified four stages in the development of our capacity to love (188-190). The first stage, corresponding to Augustine's *cupiditas*, sees us striving for temporal goods in an effort to satisfy our desires. Upon discovering that temporal goods can neither make us happy nor cure us of our mortality, in the second stage we find ourselves turning to God—not for Himself but for what He can do for us. The third stage is the result of a spiritual transformation whereby through prolonged contact with God and repeated turning to Him, we come to love Him for His own sake. In the fourth stage, hardly reachable this side of paradise, we come to love all creation for the sake of the Creator. Herein consists true happiness.

For Augustine, Bernard, and Aquinas, loving God and truly loving oneself are different perspectives of the same thing, even if the latter perspective gradually falls from view. If they *were* in conflict, says Aquinas—a logical impossibility—there would be no reason for us to love God (169). But all this struck some as problematic. Anticipating Luther, Peter Abelard (c. 1079–1142 AD) reasoned that if true love for God is for His own sake, self-love must be toxic (195). "To love God properly," Singer summarizes, "one had to renounce even the desire for [happiness],"[5] which seemed absurd to Abelard's more orthodox contemporaries. If love for God *is* happiness, how can one renounce one without renouncing the other? Moreover, if to desire happiness is human and yet a proper love for God must be free of the desire for happiness, then no human being is capable of loving God properly, and we are commanded to do the impossible.

This is Luther's conclusion and represents the second of our two theologies of the problem of love. "No one," writes Luther, "is able to love God from his whole heart, etc., and his neighbor as himself ... No one is godly purely for God's sake or solely because it is right and godly. Nature always will and must seek some reason why it should be godly" (326-327). Human nature prevents us from being able

to fulfill the commandments of love and thus from earning salvation. Unless we accept this and have faith in the salvific power of God's work in Christ, whose love fulfills the commandments to the letter, we are lost (328). Then, if we do catch ourselves loving God or neighbor truly, it is not really ourselves that we have caught doing so but the Holy Spirit (329). What is more, Christian love (Greek *agapē*) is *incompatible* with self-love (313-314). Luther writes pointedly, "If [men] should work good in order to obtain the Kingdom, they would never obtain it, but would be numbered rather with the wicked, who, with an evil and mercenary eye, seek the things of self even in God."[6] With a single blow, says Singer, Luther dashes the Gothic spires of medieval spirituality to the earth (325).

Attempting to explain why Luther was compelled to such a doctrine, Singer speculates that it had less to do with anything the Reformer found in Scripture than with his discouraging experience as a monk (329-331). Singer believes the fundamental difference between our two theologies of love—that of the medievals, with its focus on the transformation of man's love, and that of Luther, with its focus on the communication of God's love—lies in their different understandings of human nature. "Regardless of what they call themselves," he writes, "men seem to fall into two classes: those who believe that human nature is inherently good, and therefore capable of an ideal love, and those who do not—Hsün Tzu versus Mencius, Hobbes versus Locke, Schopenhauer versus Hegel, Proust versus Stendhal" (342). Luther's understanding of human nature would be that of Hobbes, while the medieval Christian understanding would be that of Locke. Our answer to the question with which we began—Is Hobbes right in claiming that we are incapable of acting selflessly?—would depend on whether we were more like Luther or the medievals in our thinking.

Concluding Thoughts on the Problem of Love

I am not persuaded that the medievals' view of human nature and that of Luther differ as radically as Singer suggests. Both views identify self-love as fundamental to humanity, and both deny that this self-love can ever become true love for God on its own; in this sense, both are closer to Hobbes than to Locke. Not even with respect to their views of justification do the inheritors of the medieval tradition and the theological descendants of Luther seem really to disagree.[7]

While Singer provides us with a useful history of the problem of love, and while he does—as promised—help us to a clearer view of the conflict surrounding it, that conflict is not between different Christian understandings of human nature. Ultimately, it is between modern and traditional understandings of love, as Singer's conclusion makes clear. Simply put, do we wish to "be ourselves" or to be truly happy—to "become what we are" or what we were meant to be?[8] *Is* man an end or *has* he one?[9] Singer conceives the final stage of love to be a "reverential attitude" that accepts all things, oneself included, exactly as they are without wishing them any different (348)[10] ... without wishing them, as Aristotle put it, "well" (348-9).[11] For my part, I cannot help recalling the words of Jesus: "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mt. 10:39).

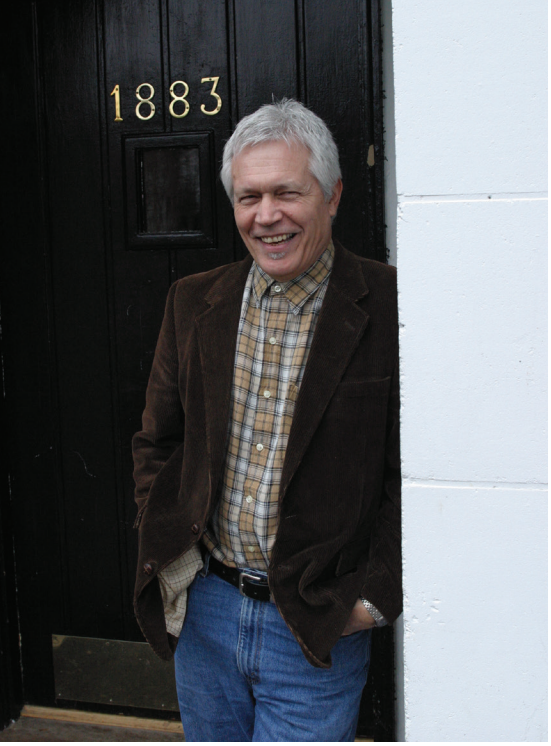
Upon further reflection, then, I do not believe the third premise of our original syllogism to be true. We do *not* wish to be loved "for ourselves alone" and out of no ulterior motive *because that is not how we love ourselves*. Just as we wish ourselves truly happy—"well"—we want *others* to wish us truly happy and to treat us accordingly. Whether they do this out of an ulterior motive is of secondary importance to us.

And what about the problem of love in its other form? If we love God out of a desire for eternal life, do we truly love Him? Well, we have it on good authority that "those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8). As long as our relationship with God is based on a purely natural love of self, however enlightened, it is doubtful that we can love Him as we ought. Whether, as Augustine believed, this love of self must be transformed by the Holy Spirit; whether the Holy Spirit must create in us an entirely new faculty, as Aquinas held; or whether, as Luther had it, the Holy Spirit must actually do the loving *for* us, Christians agree that we need a miracle. Hobbes is right about human nature, but that is an insoluble problem only for those who do not believe in a God for whom "all things are possible" (Mt. 19:26). I wish them well.

Chris Alderman is a tutor at Gutenberg College.

Notes

1. Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan.* Penguin Books, 1985, p. 193.
2. Emphasis mine. Scripture quotations are from the ESV version unless otherwise noted.
3. For more on ethical egoism, see Moreland, J. P. "Ethical Egoism and Biblical Self-Interest." *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol. 59, 1997, pp. 257-68.
4. Singer, Irving. *The Nature of Love: Plato to Luther.* University of Chicago Press, 1966. Parenthetical page numbers refer to Singer's book.
5. Cf. Spinoza's famous dictum: "Whosoever loves God cannot strive that God should love him in return."
6. Quoted in Ramsey, Paul. *Christian Ethics.* Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950, pp. 134-135.
7. The historic "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" was signed on 31 October 1999 by representatives of the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation. Of particular interest are paragraphs 15 and 21: "Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works ... When Catholics say that persons 'cooperate' in preparing for and accepting justification by consenting to God's justifying action, they see such personal consent as itself an effect of grace, not as an action arising from innate human abilities." See Long, Stephen D. *Christian Ethics: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 60-62.
8. Cf. the subtitle of Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo,* "Wie man wird, was man ist" ("How one becomes what one is").
9. Cf. "ends" and "means" in Kant's ethics, to which Singer alludes favorably on p. 352.
10. Cf. Nietzsche's *amor fati* ("love of fate"), which Singer calls the "love of life" (309).
11. While Aristotle's definition of friendship or "brotherly love" (Greek *philia*) emphasizes intentions rather than actions, it is in the same spirit as the Golden Rule.



Thank You, Wes!

by Paul Pindell

All of us at Gutenberg College owe a huge debt to Wes Hurd. His vision and desire to serve God and help others prepared the way for Gutenberg College to grow and flourish. Wes retired from his responsibilities at Gutenberg last fall, but circumstances at the time did not allow for a proper farewell, and so we want to honor Wes in this issue of *Colloquy*. Below, Paul Pindell, chairman of the Gutenberg College Board of Governors, expresses what Wes has meant to him. His heartfelt thank-you to Wes represents the gratitude of all of us at Gutenberg.

I recently attended my church's men's breakfast where this question was asked: "Did you have any men in your life who positively impacted you?" I immediately thought of Wes Hurd.

Last fall, Wes notified the Gutenberg College Board of Governors that he was retiring from his seat on the board and from his tutor duties. While his decision is the best one for him and his family, I was struck first by a sense of loss for myself and then a sense of loss for Gutenberg.

Wes has been a mentor to me for the last thirty-four years. Being able to work with Wes on the Gutenberg College board has been an amazing experience. I will miss that.

In 1978, Wes and his wife, Carol, founded the community that grew from McKenzie Study Center into Gutenberg College, and God has used them in some spectacular ways in the last forty-one years. With a heart for college students faced for the first time with professors and other authority figures espousing anti-Christian ideas, they started this community to make a place where those in the "zone" between an immature faith and the anti-Christian ideals espoused at a secular college, could come, find rest, and learn how their faith could be reasoned and defended. The Hurds' vision created McKenzie Study Center, and their faithfulness allowed Gutenberg College to grow from what they built.

I was one of the "zoners" Wes has referred to in many of his explanations for why Gutenberg exists. I came into the community with an immature faith, and I was searching for answers to bolster my faith and make it defensible. This community gave me a place where I could learn, mature in my faith, and gain confidence as I attended the University of Oregon. I knew that even if I didn't have tip-of-the-tongue answers for my professors who were so actively trying to destroy the faith of their students, still I could be confident in the belief that those faith-defending answers existed. I wasn't alone in my faith. I didn't have to feel defeated simply because I could not answer my professors' questions in the moment. I had a safe place to discuss difficult questions about my faith and to grow in faith and wisdom.

Wes invested in me and provided an amazing opportunity for me and countless others. Wes and Carol gathered a staff that all worked on the same mission, and in 1994 Gutenberg College was born as a way to advance the mission further. Wes and the rest of the staff poured their hearts into Gutenberg College and the community that surrounds it, helping students like me come to

better understand big questions and to mature in our faith.

This is Wes's second retirement. In 2012, Wes retired both from teaching full-time and directing Gutenberg's Art Project. But he returned to Gutenberg in 2016 to help the college through a time of transition, making it possible for Gutenberg to be what it is now. Some of Gutenberg's original staff and all the members of Gutenberg's board of governors were retiring, and Wes was asked by a transition committee of remaining tutors to help form a new board of governors. I was so humbled when Wes and President Chris Swanson asked me to join the new board, for which Wes has been a touchstone. He has taught the rest of us to govern the school in light of its history, in light of how and why it was founded. We hope and pray that we will continue governing so as to be true to the community Wes and Carol founded.

"Missing-Horizon"
From "The Odyssey of These Days" series

From the "Ruminations" series

Wes, your impact on me has been profound. I have had a few mentors in my life, but you are the one I consider having had the most impact on who I am today. Your tutelage helped me grapple with and understand faith, sin, righteousness, God's otherness, my creaturehood, and so much more. You also taught me the joy of good music, that I should value good art, and that as difficult as I find Kierkegaard, he is worth reading and understanding. "PBS man" and "God established a beachhead" are still poignant stories I latch onto to understand my relationship to my creator.

Wes, I will miss working with you on Gutenberg projects. Thank you for all you have done for me, for Gutenberg College, and for all those in the community who have wandered through our doors. I thank God that He made you a vessel of so much good for this community. And I hope you feel a sense of great accomplishment as you retire.

1982

Wes & Carol Hurd Celebration

April 4 • Save the Date!

Wes and Carol Hurd are the cornerstone upon which the Gutenberg College community was built. Their achievements and work have made an indelible mark on so many lives, both directly and indirectly. We would like to join together to recognize and celebrate their vision, ministry, and impact. To do so, Gutenberg College is hosting a Founder's event, and we would love for you to participate.

When: Saturday, April 4th, 4-7PM

Where: Gutenberg College

What: Celebrate the vision and ministry of the Hurds

If you can't make it but would like to join the festivities, you can submit a photo or two for us to post on the photo wall. Alternately, send in a thirty-second video to be included in a video montage. Send either the photo or video to photos@gutenberg.edu. For updates and more details as they become available, visit gutenberg.edu.

RSVP http://hyperurl.co/hurdevent

COLLOQUY Winter 2020

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Spring Preview Days
April 24 & 25

www.gutenberg.edu/preview

- Meet tutors.
- Discuss great works.
- Experience a community.
- Learn how to become a Gutenberg student.

Gutenberg Student Art Show
February 28 at 7:00 PM

This annual event highlights the art and performance of Gutenberg students and others in the community.

Gutenberg Community Classes

Winter quarter: "Contemporary Conversations, Part 2." Each class is a stand-alone topic, so join us anytime. For schedule and topics, visit www.gutenberg.edu/cc.

Summer Institute 2020
August 6-8
Struggle & Hope

In the world you have trouble, but take courage; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

Life is hard. Most literature and art produced by human beings over the centuries is about suffering, troubles, and struggle. We all experience such troubles in our own lives. And of course, this is one of the major themes explored in the Bible. "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14: 22). And yet Paul tells us that we also exult in those tribulations (Romans 5:3). The struggle of faith is in part a struggle to hold on to meaning and hope in the face of the sufferings brought upon us by the world, by each other, and by ourselves. Join us at this year's Summer Institute to explore the challenge of growing in hope as we face the struggles of life.