



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

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Hillsdale College Professor Receives \$2.5 Million Research Grant from the John Templeton Foundation

The grant will fund a three-year research project, ‘The Virtues and Vices of Spiritual Yearning.’

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College faculty member Ian Church, associate professor of philosophy, has received a \$2.5 million research grant from the John Templeton Foundation. The grant will fund a three-year research project, “The Virtues and Vices of Spiritual Yearning,” beginning this month.

“This project brings philosophy, religion, and psychology into dialogue to understand a tension at the center of human flourishing,” Church said. “We’re asking whether spiritual fulfillment heals — or whether it can also dull curiosity and invite intellectual complacency. The goal is to map virtuous middle paths — ways of pursuing satisfaction without stagnation.”

The grant will include funding for eight sub-grants (four in philosophy and four in psychology), a two-year postdoctoral appointment, undergraduate research fellowships, two conferences, six virtual workshops, and various publications and presentations.

“Projects like this give our students the opportunity to work on field-building scholarship as undergraduates,” Church said. “The opportunities for mentorship, scholarship, and research prepare them to excel in graduate school and beyond.”

The grant is the largest a Hillsdale faculty member has ever received, surpassing the \$2.3 million grant Church received from the foundation in 2021 for his project “Launching Experimental Philosophy of Religion.”

For a headshot of Church, click [here](#). For photos from Church's philosophy core class, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, *Imprimis*, with a circulation of more than 7.2 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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