**Why do you wish to attend Colorado College and how would you contribute to the community? (250 words max)**

In my college search, I’ve realized that there has only been one thing I’ve truly needed from a prospective 4-year college, one thing which I don’t think I could do without. The student population has not only to be eager and excited to learn, but also has to share with me a fear of being monotonous, a fear being carbon copies of each other. I cannot stand the thought that my unconscious actions are identical of those that surround me; I cannot stand the thought that there are ideas that, through social acclimatization, I will never think, or that will never occur to me; I cannot stand the thought that my life might be entirely dictated by customs I haven’t chosen or never agreed to.

Living among associates of the quest will not only bring me a breeding ground of analysis into the great minds of the past, but will also help free myself from the fetters of society that I might have mistakenly stepped into. I presume this is exactly what I’ll find at Colorado College.

**The Block Plan at Colorado College has a tradition of innovation and flexibility. Please design your own three-and-a-half week course and describe what you would do. (500 words max)**

My three-week course would be a thorough analysis of the development of the Free Jazz Revolution of the 1960s. There would be guided listening sessions to seminal, landmark recordings like *Free Jazz* by Ornette Coleman, *Ascension* and *Meditations* by John Coltrane, *Unit Structures* by Cecil Taylor, *Spiritual Unity* by Albert Ayler, *Out to Lunch!* by Eric Dolphy, and others. I would also encourage students to do listening of their own and bring in recordings for the class to listen to.

Central to the class would not only be listening, but discussion. Every aspect of the music is on the table, from the aesthetic parts of the music making (form, tone, group interaction, etc.), to the more contextual aspects of the musical process. In fact, we will learn that one of the most important parts of free jazz as a genre is the socio-political context of the musicians themselves, so there will be ample investigation of interviews and current events of the time among the black communities of New York City, biographies of important figureheads in the jazz movement, as well as cursory listening to and analyses of jazz from earlier decades, popular Eastern philosophies of the musicians, readings of essays by Frank Kofsky, Marion Brown, Malcolm X, and other thinkers. All of this would be meant to elucidate the political and social as well as spiritual commentary present in the free jazz recordings.

Students would have one of two options for their final project. The first would be for them to choose from a handful of free jazz artists to write a paper about that explains how circumstances of this musician’s life caused them to make the music they made, and what personal messages were communicated in the works. Another option would be for them to perform an improvisatory work of their own (with or without accompaniment) that takes after at least one of the important figures in free jazz.

This course would hopefully have the effect of teaching students, especially the ones who had not yet been exposed to this kind of music, the visceral beauties that underlie such a music that’s so uncompromising on first listen.

St John’s Required Question:

**Discuss a book that has particular significance for you. What makes this book great in your view? What effect does it have on what you think or how you think? (400 words max)**

One of the most profound books I’ve read is *The Stranger* by Albert Camus, primarily because I see myself in the character of Meursault, a man frankly dispossessed of most emotions, and who lives in a disquieting moral ambiguity.

In several passages the apathetic qualities of the character are so truly pronounced that one can’t help but feel understanding for his disengagement. The most striking, yet most profound, is, I’d say, at the apex of the narrative where Meursault is distracted by the sun, and its deafening heat, and ends up shooting a man. It’d be hasty to say shooting a man *out of boredom*, because the fascinating part of the story is that Meursault acts unethically (against the society’s code of conduct) for no discernable reason. His dispossession is marked by its unnecessariness.

As mentioned, this book had a particularly profound impact on me mostly because Meursault reminds me of myself. There are the more superfluous traits I hold which may seem reminiscent of the character mostly by inference, like how I murmur and sometimes abruptly lose my train of thought, but there are also deeper patterns I’ve taken note of. People have questioned me at times for not expressing the correct emotions, and not just that, but the correct physical responses to those emotions, and this has been a moderate source of guilt in my life. I remember from the deaths of both my grandpa and dog, I felt sad, but for some reason I wasn’t at all compelled to tears. And the emotional residue cleaned itself away in due, possibly short, time. It felt bizarre to me at the time that I wasn’t having a more robust and intense emotional reaction, and even felt sorry for not being able to show these two figures in my life who had just passed away the extent to which their absence would be felt, but after reading *The Stranger*, it’s starting to make more sense. It’s not my duty to reciprocate the customary emotional reactions of others. I am my own individual, and for better or for worse, I have *no* duties.

Wait, that sounds way too much like Sartre. Is this the message we’re supposed to take away? It seems like by the end of the novel, Meursault, when he’s condemned to death, he finds an emotional springbroad in not wanting to die. At least, in the end, we are all humans, I suspect Camus is saying, and we should revel in the fate of our biologies, and simultaneously rebel against them and drive ourselves to live creatively and honestly. The full life capacity is not truly experienced unless the lucidity of the contradiction is constant and unbearable. There, that’s more like it.