



Grace Communion Seminary
TH507: Theology of C. S. Lewis
Short Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Gary W. Deddo

(Instructor may be contacted through GCS course website)

Course Description

In this course we will survey C.S. Lewis's primary works and two of his fictional works to see how Lewis understood the central tenets of Christian faith and their inter-relationships. We will consider how Lewis communicated the Christian faith in his context through his fiction and how we might more faithfully communicate the Christian gospel in our day.

Required Texts and Articles

Reading assignments will be taken from the required texts and from "on reserve" readings of several essays. It is recommended that the required texts be purchased.

C. S. Lewis is the author of all the required readings. *Any edition of these books, including electronic editions, is acceptable for the class.* The ISBN number below references the most recent edition and is provided for your convenience. The prices given are estimates. See bookfinder.com for good prices.

Complete Texts

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*, HarperSanFrancisco; Revised & Enlarged edition, 2001. ISBN: 978-0060652920. Approx. \$9

Lewis, C. S. *The Problem of Pain*, HarperOne, 2001. ISBN: 978-0060652968. Approx \$9

Lewis, C. S. *God in the Dock*, edited Walter Hooper. Eerdmans, 1994. ISBN: 978-0802808684. Approx \$3

Lewis, C. S. *The Silver Chair*, Scholastic Inc; First Scholastic Printing edition (1995) ISBN: 978-0590254809 (or any other edition) Approx \$1 (used)

Lewis, C. S. *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, HarperOne, 2001. ISBN: 978-0060653200. Approx \$10

Lewis, C. S. *The Great Divorce*, HarperOne, 2001. ISBN: 978-0060652951. Approx \$9

Lewis, C. S. *Christian Reflections*, Eerdmans, 1994 ISBN: 978-0802808691. Approx \$1 used

Required Articles “On Reserve” (these do not need to be purchased)

“On Obstinacy in Belief” in *World’s Last Night*, on reserve (17 pp.)

“A Word about Praising” from *Reflections on the Psalms*, on reserve (10 pp.)

“On the Efficacy of Prayer” in *World’s Last Night*, on reserve (8 pp.)

Additional Primary Sources

(These books by Lewis will be referred to in the course but are not required reading.)

Letters to Malcolm, Chiefly on Prayer

Till We Have Faces

The Abolition of Man

Miracles

Screwtape Letters

The Four Loves

An Experiment in Criticism

“On Stories” in *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*

A Grief Observed

Recommended Texts/Short Bibliography (for supplementary reading)

Beverluis, John. *C.S. Lewis and the Search for Rational Religion*. Eerdmans, 1985.

Reppert, Victor, *C.S. Lewis’s Dangerous Idea: In Defense of the Argument from Reason*. InterVarsity Press, 2003.

Sayer, George. *Jack: C.S. Lewis and His Times*. InterVarsity Press, 1988.

Vaus, Will. *Mere Theology: A Guide to the Thought of C.S. Lewis*.
InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Baggett, David, *et. al.* editors, *C. S. Lewis as Philosopher*,
InterVarsity Press, 2008.

See Select Bibliography at the end of the syllabus for further guidance
to secondary sources on Lewis and some of his critics.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- 1) describe the major theological themes and their inter-relationships as developed by Lewis, including his understanding of the Christian life. (Through readings and class discussion accounted for in the reading notebook online forums.)
- 2) analyze and critique aspects of Lewis's thought and arguments in the light of Scripture, relevant ecumenical creeds of the church and contemporary expressions of evangelical theology with some reference to a few of his contemporary critics. (Through readings and accounted for in reading notebook and online discussions)
- 3) draw from Lewis's thought in a way that contributes to the student's own ability to more faithfully articulate key theological themes and thereby enrich their own ministry, preaching, teaching and personal lives as members of the Body of Christ in its local and global expressions. (Through the forums, reading notebook entries, final paper and final exam)
- 4) identify, appreciate and reflect critically upon how Lewis understood and attempted to relate with theological faithfulness literary form and theological content in his writings. (Through online forums and accounted for in the reading notebook and final exam)

Course Assignments

Overview

- 1) Completion of all assigned reading of required texts and essays due prior to participating in class forums. This amounts to 900 pages of reading, accounted for in the Reading Notebook and the Reading Report List. (30% of grade).

- 2) Reading all instructor lecture or instructions sent during the assigned week, about 1 hour per week.
- 3) Submitting a one page Autobiographical Sketch for the instructor and the rest of the class participants the first week of class.
- 4) Participation in two weekly online Forums: One or two entries per week on the Instructor's Forum and two entries per week on the class discussion forum. (25% of grade)
- 5) Completion of one 2-3 page Short Essay making use of one of Lewis's imaginative elements to communicate a theological truth. (15% of Grade)
- 6) Completion of the Final take-home exam (30% of grade)

Reading Assignments

-You will find due dates for the readings listed in the separate "Course Outline and Required Reading Assignment Schedule" document.

-You will also be provided, separately, a "Suggested Reading Plan" which will assure that you read the correct material for any given week but also help you read on average the same number of pages per week. The Plan will recommend that you read parts of longer books ahead of time so that you don't have to read more than the average of 90 pages in any one week.

1. Selections from *Mere Christianity*

Mere Christianity, Book II, What Christians Believe (skip Book I)
Mere Christianity, Book IV, Beyond Personality (Trinity)
Mere Christianity, Book III, Christian Behavior

2. *The Problem of Pain*

3. Essays from *God in the Dock* (GD), *The Weight of Glory* (WG), *Christian Reflections* (CR), *The World's Last Night* (WLN)

"Is Theism Important?" (GD)
 "Meditation in a Tool Shed" (GD)
 "What Are We to Make of Jesus Christ?" (GD)
 "The Grand Miracle" (GD)
 "The Language of Religion" (CR)
 "Horrid Red Things" (GD)
 "Is Theology Poetry?" (WG)
 "Christian Apologetics" (GD)
 "Religion without Dogma?" (GD)

“Miracles” (GD)
“The Seeing Eye” in CR
“Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism” in CR.
“Myth Became Fact” (GD)
“Bulverism” (GD)
“The Poison of Subjectivity” in CR
“Religion: Reality or Substitute?” in CR
“On Obstancy in Belief” in WLN, on reserve
“Man or Rabbit” (GD)
“A Word about Praising” from *Reflections on the Psalms*, on reserve.
“A Slip of the Tongue” in WG
“The Weight of Glory” in WG
“On the Efficacy of Prayer” in WLN, on reserve
“The Sermon and the Lunch” (GD)
“The Trouble with X” (GD)
“Two Ways with the Self” (GD)
“First and Second Things” (GD)

4. *The Great Divorce*

5. *The Silver Chair*

Course Outline and General Assignment Schedule

Completion of the reading assignments are due *before* the forum interactions and instructor prompts are read. Consult the separate “Course Outline and Required Reading Assignment Schedule” document for the exact due dates for the reading. The forum assignments should be done *after* the reading assignments are completed.

WEEK 1

Topic: The Life and Times of C.S. Lewis, The Nature of Christian Faith

Add to the Forums your Questions, Comments and Responses, by Friday, 10 pm

Submit Autobiographical Sketch by Wednesday, noon, of this week.

WEEK 2

Topic: God, the gods, the Trinity, Incarnation

Add to the Forums your Question or Comment or Response, by
Friday 10 pm

WEEK 3

Topic: Creation, the Fall and Salvation

Add to the Forums your Question or Comment and Response, by
Friday 10 pm

WEEK 4

Topic: Speaking of God, Defending the Faith

Add to the Forums your Question or Comment and Response, by
Friday 10 pm

WEEK 5

Topic: Truth, Reality, Belief and Doubt

Add to the Forums your Question or Comment and Response, by
Friday 10 pm

Submit Reading Notebook and Reading Report List for midterm
evaluation/feedback by Saturday 10 pm.

WEEK 6

Topic: Believing, Doing and Becoming under the Love of God

Add to the Forums your Question or Comment and Response, by
Friday 10 pm

WEEK 7

Topic: The Christian Life: Faith, Hope and Love

Add to the Forums your Question or Comment and Response, by
Friday 10 pm

WEEK 8

Topic: God, Good, Heaven and Hell

Add to the Forums your Question or Comment and Response, by
Friday 10 pm

WEEK 9

Topic: C.S. Lewis as a Mythmaking Witness to the Gospel

Add to the Forums your Question or Comment and Response, by
Friday 10 pm

WEEK 10

Topic: C.S. Lewis: Athanasian Theologian. Appreciation and
Appraisal

Add to the Forums your Question or Comment and Response, by
Friday 10 pm

WEEK 11

Submit Reading Notebook by Wednesday, 11:59 pm
Complete Short Essay Assignment 1 by Saturday, 11:59 pm
Prepare for Exam

WEEK 12

Prepare for Exam

WEEK 13

Complete and submit Final Exam by Monday, 5 pm of this week.

Course Grading

Assignments Weights

The final grade will be based on a 100 point total with the
assignments weighted as follows:

30% Reading and Reading Notebook (15% Quantity & Summaries,
15% quality of comments)
30% Final Exam
15% Short Essay Assignment
25% Online Forum postings/interaction (12% Instructor Forum, 13%
Student Discussion Forum)

Assignments, estimated hours, and grade weighting

Activity	Course Assignment		Estimated hours (for the average student)	Percentage of grade
Classroom	Instructor Prompts and Forum questions , at <u>4</u> pages per hour	number of pages: 40 (4 pages per weekly topic)	10.0	Required to pass to pass course
	Reading discussion forums and making responses	number of required forums: 20	20	25 %
	Final Exam	number: 1	3	30%
	Total		33.0	
Out of classroom	Required textbooks, ordinary reading level, <u>20</u> pages per hour	number of pages: 245	12.5	
	Required textbooks, difficult reading, at <u>15</u> pages per hour	number of pages: 655	44.0	All reading: 15%
	Writing reaction or reflection paper, 2 hours per page (Short Paper)	number of pages 2:	4	15 %
	Study for exam	6	6	
	Reflection Comments in Reading Notebook	85 ½-page entries @ 30 min. / entry	42.5	15%
	Total		109.0	
Overall total			142	11 hours per week