

HUMA 405–Topics in International Humanities*
England 2016 (July 6– August 1, 2016)
~Life and Writings of C.S. Lewis~
COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Michael Jeffress, Ph.D. Office Location: Talbot 101-F Office Phone: 448-4584 Email: michael.jeffress@nicholls.edu
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Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Students with a documented disability are entitled to classroom accommodations under the ADA. To receive accommodations, contact the Office of Disability Services at (985) 448-4430 or 158-A Shaver Gym. Additional information can be found at www.nicholls.edu/disability.

I. Course Description: HUMA 405. Topics in International Humanities. 3-3-0. Intensive study of the humanistic contributions of a selected country or area. The course normally requires travel to a non-English speaking country or region. May be repeated for credit if content differs. (24.0103)

II. Course Objectives. In addition to experiencing the rich history and culture of Great Britain, in this course, you will learn about the life and times of famed Oxford scholar and author C. S. Lewis and the influences that help explain his motivations and lasting achievements. Lewis was one of the leading literary critics and Christian thinkers of the 20th Century. He was part of an inner circle of Oxford dons and friends called The Inklings, a group that included the likes of J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, and Owen Barfield. Over the past 50+ years, Lewis’s books have sold hundreds of millions of copies, and annual sales of his titles still exceed two million in the U.S. and U.K. Numerous motion pictures and stage plays have been produced based on the life and writings of Lewis, most notably: *The Shadowlands*, *Through the Shadowlands*, and *The Chronicles of Narnia* series. In 2013 he was honored with a memorial stone in Poets’ Corner in Westminster Abbey beside such greats as John Keats, William Blake, and T.S. Eliot.

Lewis is, above all, a religious writer (i.e., after his conversion from atheism in 1931 at the age of 32)—hence, during the course we will explore certain theological concepts as relevant to understanding his life and commitments—as well as the themes and points of view emphasized in his work. This is not a course in religion per se, and no assumptions are made about your own personal stance. No one is asked to believe anything. However, you do need to know upfront that because of Lewis’s Christian worldview, we will be exploring in some depth how these convictions shaped his life and writings. We will neither attempt to defend nor ridicule anybody’s faith or lack thereof, and I will police this, well, “religiously.” You are asked to evaluate critically everything you read for this course and feel free to affirm or critique respectfully whatever you wish throughout it.

In order to appreciate fully Lewis and his contribution to both religious and literary studies, it is worth understanding him in his primary environments in and around Oxford.

By touring and studying in this historic university town and in Lewis' estate, the Kilns, our understanding of Lewis will be greatly enhanced. In tea rooms and pubs, in chapels and cemeteries, on walking tours through Oxford and along Addison's Way, we will imbibe the words and spirit of Lewis, being placed in the authentic context of his writing and speaking.

The specific learning outcome objectives are as follows:

- A. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to see the connections between the expository and imaginative works of Lewis and begin to understand the relationship between reason and imagination.
- B. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to acquire knowledge of the life and writings of an important 20th Century Christian thinker.
- C. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to summarize, and comment upon various types of texts (children's fiction, adult fiction, nonfiction, biography, autobiography, philosophy, diary, letters, essays, lectures, and film).
- D. Students who successfully complete this course will develop critical reading skills and understand and critically evaluate C.S. Lewis' ideas.
- E. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to recognize and be sensitive to the problems and challenges inherent in engaging, describing, and interpreting the work of C. S. Lewis.
- F. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to discuss the ideas of some of the key colleagues, close friends, thinkers and theorists that populate Lewis's work and have contributed to his writing.
- G. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to discuss and write proficiently about some of the key works produced by Lewis.
- H. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to experience other students' perspectives and recognize one's own assumptions and apply Lewis's ideas to contemporary issues and to connect insights gained in class to personal life.
- I. Because this class takes place in England and focuses on a British author, students will also gain new understandings and perspectives on the history and culture of a prominent European country.

III. Course Requirements and Assessments.

1. Attendance. Students will be expected to attend mandatory classes (including a few prior to departure). Classes will consist of lecture and class discussion over readings, documentary film and motion picture presentations, and student led presentations.

2. Engagement. Students are responsible for assigned videos (movies and documentary films shown in class and/or made available for viewing outside of class) and readings in

the required texts, as well as course materials and assignments posted to Moodle. Class participation, discussion, and debate are rooted in completing required reading and viewing assignments. All assignments must be completed in order to pass this course.

3. Reading reflections. A discussion forum for each reading assignment will be found in Moodle. Each forum will have a list of discussion questions for critical reflection about the reading. Each student will select a different question to answer in a post of 300-500 words and respond to the posts of two classmates ahead of class discussion on the book. Forums will be made available at least two weeks prior to departure for England to allow students to work ahead on assignments. Pop quizzes over assigned readings are possible, and, if administered, will be weighted into the Reading Reflections grade.

4. Class facilitation assignment. Students will work in pairs to select one of the required textbooks (or a section within one of them) to prepare an abstract and a 1-2 page typed report to present (not read) to the class on the historical context and important themes of the selected work (or section within it). A list of sections to be covered will be provided ahead of time to allow students to prepare in advance.

5. Class Screwtape letters. Each student will select a favorite Screwtape letter and do an interpretive reading and lead a discussion of it in class. In addition, each student will write her or his own Screwtape letter (400-800 words), addressing some contemporary social, political, religious, or cultural issue and share it with the class. An example will be provided in Moodle.

6. Final Exam. One essay examination will be administered through Moodle on assigned readings and viewings, class lectures and discussion, reading reflections, and places visited. Students will be allowed to reference their textbooks and notes while taking the exam, but it will be timed and students will need to be familiar with the content in order to complete the exam within the time allotted.

7. Travel Scrapbook. Students will keep a travel journal for the duration of the course. The first entry should be from the night before the departure to England and the final entry the evening of the flight home. Each entry should be dated and consist of an average of 300 words (2-3 paragraphs) to record your understandings, thoughts, questions, and life applications related to reading assignments, viewing assignments, class discussions, sites visited, and cross-cultural experiences encountered during the course. In addition to written journal notes, students will collect personal photos and other relics (e.g., newspaper/magazine clippings, pamphlets, ticket stubs, meal receipts, etc.) throughout the course. Students will create a neat and well-formatted scrapbook in a 3-ring binder to display journal entries and highlights from the trip. Scrapbooks will need to be delivered to the Mass Communication office (Talbot 102) no later than 12:00 p.m (noon), Friday, August 26th.

8. Research Paper. Each student is required to write a research paper on some aspect of Lewis's life and writing. The paper should follow MLA or APA style, be 1800-2500 words (8-10 pages, double-spaced, excluding title page and works cited) and reference a

minimum of 6 scholarly reference works (books or journal articles only). Potential topics are vast and should be pre-approved. Papers must be uploaded to Moodle by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, August 14th.

IV. Required Textbooks. Note: The works listed below by Lewis are widely available for purchase in paperback, e-book, and audio book format, and for checkout at public libraries (although having your own personal copy is highly recommended). For the most part these are short works that are quick reads. You can choose from various anthologies that combine two or more titles into one volume. You can get any edition of the titles below from any publisher. You should have no trouble securing all the books for less than what you normally pay for a traditional college textbook. All books should be read prior to departure for England.

Duriez, C. (2015). *The Oxford Inklings: Their Lives, Writings, Ideas and Influence*. Oxford: Lion Hudson. This is a biographical work that introduces you to the men who met on Tuesday mornings at the pub (and at other times and places) to have fellowship, read excerpts of their writings, and engage in scholarly discussions over a pint, including: C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Owen Barfield, and Charles Williams.

Lewis, C. S. (2010). *The Chronicles of Narnia* (7 Volumes can be purchased individually or as a box set). New York: Harper Collins Publishers. For class you need the three titles that have been made into Disney/Walden Media motion pictures:

_____. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.

_____. *Prince Caspian*.

_____. *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*.

Lewis, C.S. (2007) *The Complete C.S. Lewis Signature Classics*. New York: HarperCollins. Or otherwise purchase individually:

_____. *Mere Christianity*. The book form of radio talks that Lewis gave on the BBC during WWII. Perhaps the most widely read of Lewis' titles. It is Lewis' "layman's" apology for Christian faith.

_____. *The Screwtape Letters*. A collection of satirical letters from Uncle Screwtape, a senior devil in service to "Our Father Below," counseling his nephew Wormwood, a novice demon, on the fine art of temptation.

_____. *The Abolition of Man*. Fellow Inklings and distinguished writer, Owen Barfield, considered this to be Lewis's best book. In this nonfiction piece, Lewis warns of an education system that ignores a natural law common to all cultures, which Lewis refers to as the *Tao*, and produces what he calls "men without chests."

_____. *The Great Divorce*. In your instructor's personal favorite work of Lewis, an allegory reminiscent of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, damned souls in hell take a bus ride up to heaven and turn down their second chance for Paradise.

_____. *A Grief Observed*. These excerpts from Lewis's diary capture his anger and bewilderment at God during his process of grieving for his wife, who died from cancer after four years of marriage.

Lewis, C. S. (1995). *Surprised by Joy*. New York: Harcourt. Inc. This is Lewis's autobiography and a primary text, together with *A Grief Observed*, from which the movie *Shadowlands* was scripted.

Lewis, C.S. (2003). *That Hideous Strength*. New York: Scribner. Considered by most critics to be Lewis's finest work of adult fiction, this dystopian novel is the third installment in what is commonly referred to as the Ransom Trilogy or Space Trilogy. Its rich imagery illustrates the principles of his non-fiction *The Abolition of Man* and evokes philosophical reflection on the relationship between science and ethics.

Other Recommended Works:

Brockliss, L.W.B. (2008). *Magdalen College Oxford: A History*. Oxford: Magdalen College. (Out of print, but available used or through inter-library loan and will be on reserve at the university library)

Como, James. T. (2008). *Branches to Heaven*. (2nd ed.) New York: Spence Publishing Company.

Cunich, Peter, et al. (1994). *A History of Magdalene College Cambridge, 1428-1988*. Cambridge: Magdalene College Publications. (Out of print, but available used or through inter-library loan)

Darwell-Smith, Robin. (2008). *A History of University College, Oxford*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Out of print, but available used or through inter-library loan and will be on reserve at the university library)

Duriez, Colin (2003). *Tolkien and C.S. Lewis: The gift of friendship*. Mahwah, NJ: Hidden Spring, Paulist Press.

Heck, Joel D. (2006). *Irrigating Deserts: C.S. Lewis on Education*. St. Louis: Concordia.

Jacobs, A. (2005). *The Narnian: The Life and Imagination of C.S. Lewis*. New York: HarperCollins, Publishers.

Knight, Gareth (1992). *The Magical World of the Inklings: J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, Owen Barfield*. Rockport, MA: Element Books.

Lewis, C.S. (2009). *The Problem of Pain*. New York: HarperCollins.

Lewis, C. S. and Hooper, Walter. (1967). *Christian Reflections*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

_____. (2005). *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*. New York: Eerdmans Pub. Co.

_____. (2001). *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco. We will read Lewis's famous address "The Weight of Glory" (pp. 25-46) together at the location where Lewis first delivered it: The

Church of St. Mary the Virgin in Oxford. We will also discuss in class his “Why I Am not a Pacifist” (pp. 64-90)

McGrath, A. (2014). *The Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons.

Nicoli, Armand. (2003). *The Question of God: C.S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud Debate God, Love, Sex and the Meaning of Life*. New York: Free Press. (Nicoli produced a documentary film by the same name, which we will view in class)

Poe, H. L, & Veneman, J. R. (2009). *The Inklings of Oxford: C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Their Friends*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan

Ward, Michael. (2010). *The Narnia Code: C. S. Lewis and the Secret of the Seven Heavens*. Oxford: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. (Ward has produced a documentary film by the same title, which we will view in class).

V. Other Required Materials:

- A. A digital camera or camera phone with capability of downloading pictures to a computer or uploading them to the Internet.
- B. A notebook for taking field notes and recording journal entries.

VI. Grades. The gradebook will be kept in Moodle. Final grades are based on points earned out of a total of 500 (450-500, A; 400-449, B; 350-399, C; 300-349, D; 0-299, F):

Screwtape Letters	50 pts. (2 @ 25 pts./ea)
Class Facilitation	50 pts.
Reading Reflections	100 pts.
Final Exam	100 pts.
Scrapbook	100 pts.
Research Paper	100 pts.

VII. Oxford Itinerary. After spending several days in London and a few weeks in class at Plymouth University, we will depart for Oxford to visit the historic college campus and town in which Lewis and the Inklings lived and taught. A detailed itinerary will be provided as a separate document to provide students with the planned Oxford events once all reservations and plans are confirmed. Students can expect to share several teas and meals together at locations tied to Lewis’ history. We will do several walking tours in and around Oxford and enjoy several pub crawls. We will also visit The Kilns, where Lewis lived, and The Holy Trinity Church, where Lewis attended and is buried. We plan to attend an open air Shakespeare performance on campus, and students will also have free time to pursue their own points of interest.

*The contents of this syllabus and the associated travel itinerary are subject to change. Students will be updated if and when any changes are made.

AN ABRIDGED CHRONOLOGY OF C. S. “JACK” LEWIS’S LIFE (Adapted from *The Essential C. S. Lewis*, Lyle W. Dorsett, editor)

THE EARLY YEARS

1898 Born on November 29 in Belfast, Ireland.

1914 Tutored by W. T. Kirkpatrick.

1916 Read George MacDonald’s *Phantastes*. This book, he wrote, “baptized” his imagination. MacDonald, he later claimed, was quoted in every book he subsequently published.

THE UNIVERSITY AND WAR YEARS

1917 Begins his studies at University College, Oxford, in April.

1917 Commissioned a second lieutenant in the Somerset Light Infantry in September; sent to the front lines in November.

1918 Wounded in action in April.

1919 Returns to University College

1920 Takes first in Honour Moderations (midway examinations)

1922 Takes first in Greats (classics and philosophy) and awarded B.A.

1923 Takes first in English Language and Literature in the Honour School.

HIS OXFORD ACADEMIC CAREER

1924 Assumes duties as a tutor at University College

1925 Elected Fellow in English Language and Literature at Magdalen College, Oxford.

1929 His father, Albert J. Lewis, becomes a theist (but not a Christian)

1931 Becomes a Christian during the motorcar ride to the Whipsnade Zoo

1933 Publishes *The Pilgrim’s Regress*

1938 Publishes the first of his Space Trilogy, *Out of the Silent Planet*

1940 Publishes *The Problem of Pain*; begins lectures on Christianity to the Royal Air Force.

1941 Began a series of twenty-four talks on the British Broadcasting Corporation radio; transcripts published as *Broadcast Talks* the following year.

1942 Publishes *The Screwtape Letters* and *A Preface to “Paradise Lost.”*

1943 Publishes *Perelandra*, *The Abolition of Man*, and the BBC radio talks entitled *Christian Behaviour*.

1944 Publishes *Beyond Personality* from his BBC talks.

1945 Publishes *The Great Divorce* and *That Hideous Strength*.

1950 Receives his first letter from Joy Davidman; published *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (first Narnian Chronicle).

1952 Met Joy Davidman; publishes *Mere Christianity*, which includes *Broadcast Talks*, *Christian Behaviour*, and *Beyond Personality*, all in revised form.

HIS CAMBRIDGE ACADEMIC CAREER

1955 Assumes the position of Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Magdalene College, Cambridge.

1956 Marries Joy Davidman in a civil ceremony in April; published *The Last Battle* (last Narnian Chronicle) and *Till We Have Faces*.

1960 Publishes *The Four Loves*; His wife, Joy, died on July 13.

1961 Publishes *A Grief Observed*.

1963 Dies on November 22, the same day Aldous Huxley and John F. Kennedy died.

1964 His final book is published posthumously, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer*.